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Joy in God

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Joy in God

By the

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Preface

ANOTHER Lenten Mission has come and gone. It began in snow and hail, and ended in summer sunshine—a type of what often happens in a Mission to a human soul—but whether in deep snow or in sunshine which tempted everyone into the country, the same quiet and reverent congregations attended the Mission from the beginning to the end. Especially was this noticeable with the services for men, to whom the four addresses in Part II. were addressed. The silence of the men, and their attention to what were talks rather than sermons, and which occupied in each case more than fifty minutes, were a proof of how untrue it is that the minds and hearts of men are closed to the Gospel to-day.

With regard to the message of the Mission, I have said so much in the opening sermon that I need say little in the Preface. I feel increasingly that “Joy in GOD” is what Christians need. They had it in the old days. We are always reading that “they returned to Jerusalem with great joy”; that they “rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer shame for His name”; and in prison and alone St. Paul cried: “Rejoice in the LORD always : and again I say, Rejoice.” We have

Preface

comparatively little of it in the Church to-day. This is the reason why our services are often uninspiring ; this is the reason why in times of sorrow the faith of Christians melts away ; this is the reason why there is such an absence of *spring* in our Mission efforts.

May GOD bless this humble effort to bring *joy* back into the hearts and lives of Christians, and may the words when written be allowed to do what by GOD'S mercy they did, at least with some, when spoken !

A. F. LONDON.

FEAST OF ST. PHILIP AND
ST. JAMES, 1909.

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JOY IN GOD

I

ST. JOHN'S, EALING

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

JOY IN GOD

“Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : *yet* I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation.”—
HAB. iii. 17, 18.

I PRAYED long and earnestly as to what should be the message of this Mission. All through West London in 1906 we took “The passing of JESUS of Nazareth,” “JESUS of Nazareth passeth by;” and it was beautiful to see how He did pass by. He healed this one, broke the chain of this sin, brought light to that other. One man who had not prayed for thirty years came to me out of the gallery of a great West London church, when he realised for the first time the words, “I am the Light of the World.” Then all through the great northern district we went on a “Mission of the SPIRIT” *—“Not by might, nor by power, but by My SPIRIT, saith the Lord of Hosts”; and we thought of all the comfort of the

* The addresses are published in “A Mission of the SPIRIT.”

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SPIRIT, and all the inspiration of the SPIRIT, and the piercing power of the SPIRIT. What a message that was to dwell upon! Then down through the poor parts of East London, in church after church, we sounded "the Call of the FATHER."

"Return, O wanderer, return,
Thy FATHER waits for thee."

That was the hymn for that Mission.* In 1908, through Central London, we had "the Love of the TRINITY"—GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST,† bound together by a bond of beautiful love, united in love for one another, and in their work of love for the human race. And therefore it was an important thing to know what for the western suburbs, in their turn, was the message that GOD wanted us to give; what there was besides all this; what there was to come down in the midst of all the teaching you have in your churches; what there was which, by His help, might be an inspiration for the Christian life of the West.

It came at last—"Joy in GOD." "Joy in GOD"—that is what we want. No heads that miserably hang down; no coming to church because we think it is the respectable thing to do; no religion that shrivels up the moment any adversity comes; no religion that is meant for fine days, and will not stand a storm. No; "Joy in GOD"—"Joy in GOD" whatever happens: "Joy in GOD" when everything has gone, "Joy in GOD" when the world thinks we are blasted with calamity. That is what we want;

* Published in "The Call of the FATHER."

† Published in "The Love of the TRINITY."

and we could not find a more complete description of it than in the words of this old prophet. Hear them again. Remember, it is an agriculturist who is looking at things from a country point of view, and think what miserable desolation he pictures: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls"—in the midst of that utter desolation, "*yet* I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation." Joy in GOD when there is nothing else left—that is the message that is going to ring on right through our Mission. And in it I want to pass by now one or two things which might seem to be a necessary preliminary.

I must explain to the man behind the pillar, who has come into the church possibly out of curiosity, and who has very little belief at present in anything, that I cannot begin every single Mission by arguing whether there is a GOD or not. If he wants me to answer that, let him send up a question; and in answering the questions, as the Mission goes on, I will try to answer any honest difficulty. But I cannot begin every Mission by explaining or arguing whether or not there is a GOD. For years we have done that in open-air discussions and in great lecture-halls. And therefore I frankly say to you that I am assuming that there is a living Being Whom we call GOD. Nor am I going to discuss whether there is such a thing as a joy which nothing can take away. I can only tell you that I have seen it again and again in the slums of East London; I have seen it

in the face of a man or a woman or a child who sometimes had nothing whatever, who were sick and poverty-stricken, with death staring them in the face ; I have seen the joy in their faces which the world never gave, and which the world can never take away. I have seen it in West London ; I saw it in the face of one to whom the Mission in Central London changed the whole of life. And therefore I am assuming that there is such a thing, that there is a joy in GOD which the world cannot give, and which the world cannot take away.

But the question we have to face, which I want to face with you, is this : What is there about GOD which, when you believe it, gives you a joy in GOD in calamity or happiness, in sickness or health, in prosperity or adversity ? I believe you will find there are six things about GOD which, if you believe them, give you joy in GOD, quite independently of earthly happiness or unhappiness.

(1) And the first thing is GOD'S *perfect goodness*. Perhaps at first sight you say : " But is it true that GOD'S goodness makes me rejoice ? Does not GOD'S goodness almost paralyse me, and make me ashamed of myself ? It does not make me rejoice." Wait a moment. Think of the best man or the best woman you know ; is it not true that, however inferior you think you are, and feel yourself to be, and however much they make you ashamed of yourself, you do rejoice in their goodness, certainly in your best moments ? I know people who are simply feeling that their belief in human nature depends on the best man or the best woman they know, and they rejoice in their goodness. Their whole faith

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would go if that man or woman fell, and just because they feel so weak themselves, they rejoice in the goodness of their friends. Now, I say this to you, as a man among you, with all my infirmities and all my weaknesses, and my perfect consciousness that I must depend entirely upon the grace of GOD every day for strength and for work—I say I rejoice in the goodness of GOD. If anyone could for a moment blacken that goodness, if anyone could prove to me that GOD was not utterly good, I should lose my greatest comfort in life.

And yet I know two or three things which people bring up to me against the goodness of GOD. They say: "What about that poor shivering crowd on the Embankment every night?" They say: "Why has He made goodness so difficult, if He is so good?" They say: "Is not His goodness very far off, and something we cannot touch or appreciate?" I would like to answer that as I go on. I have seen that shivering crowd on the Embankment, and it makes me ashamed, not of GOD, but of the way in which we have acted as stewards of what GOD has given us. It is the mess which man has made of GOD'S gifts; it is not GOD'S fault. GOD has given us a good world, with plenty of good things in it, but He has not treated us like children; He has treated us like men, and we are stewards of GOD'S good things. I could not help going and, at any rate, convincing some of those poor, shivering men that there was some goodness in man, lest they should curse GOD and die. But you have no right, my sceptical friend, to charge man's mismanagement against the good GOD. GOD is per-

fectly good ; He made the world, and pronounced it "very good." But the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. It is not GOD'S fault. Get out of your mind that lurking idea that GOD is not good because of the unhappiness and misery which we see in the world. We are GOD'S stewards ; it is our business to get that unhappiness and misery rectified for GOD. GOD has trusted us to do it. Again, do you say that goodness is made too difficult ? Are you one of those who have before now said to me : "I am not, and I cannot be, good. Why did GOD give me this flesh and blood ? Why did GOD give me this human nature ? He treated me unfairly. He has made goodness very difficult to young men and young women" ? Has He ? I will ask you to be perfectly honest with yourself. That thing which may be on your conscience to-night—was it your fault or GOD'S fault ? I believe every honest conscience says : "It was my fault ; I did it. I need not have done it." Need you have told that lie ? Need you have yielded to that passion ? Need you have done that act of dishonesty ? You know you need not have done it. And, after seeing the lives of a great number of young men, and knowing them individually, I know that it is not true to say that GOD has made the struggle of life impossible ; that (if we are frank with ourselves) we know that if we had not ill-treated and mismanaged our own bodies and souls, if we had depended upon the strength of GOD and the goodness of GOD, which was always within our reach, we might have resisted that temptation, and we might have been good. But perhaps you say : "GOD'S goodness is so far away. Why do you

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suppose the Incarnation came about at all? What was the Incarnation?" I know those who attend this church know well enough that the Christian Gospel is not about a good man who came and lived here a good life, and died upon the Cross, but the Christian Gospel is that it was GOD Who showed Himself in human flesh: "The glory, grace, and truth of GOD was shown in the face of JESUS CHRIST." And do you mean to say that you see that moving picture of the perfect Being Who won the heart of the world, moving up and down the sick crowd, tending the children, blessing the weak, and carrying an atmosphere of love and help about with Him, without understanding that this was GOD'S goodness brought near to us? They said: "See how ye prevail nothing! The world has gone after Him." And therefore I say (I come round to this): the goodness of GOD, the goodness of GOD shown in the face of JESUS CHRIST, is the first cause of joy; and it is in the light of that goodness that I want you to ask yourself your first question—"Am I a good man? Am I a good woman? Am I really a good boy or a good girl?" In this hushed silence we have no more right to trifle with reality than we have in the presence of the dying. A Mission is always like the presence of the dying to me, and you could not tell a lie to a dying man. When the SPIRIT of GOD is poured out, you cannot look up in His face and tell a lie.

And therefore I would ask you first to be honest with yourself. As we kneel down in silence to rejoice in the goodness of GOD, in the light of that goodness let us ask ourselves: "Am I good?"

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Am I good right through ? Am I good behind the scenes ? Am I not merely keeping up an appearance before other people ? But am I really good, left to myself, with all eyes off me ? Can I look up and have the answer of a good conscience before a good GOD ? If not, let me go down upon my knees, and say : 'In this, in this, in this I am not good.' " It is always in one thing. It is astonishing how people parade all the things they do well carefully before themselves. "I say my prayers ; there is no dishonesty in my business ; I am not uncharitable ; I am kind-hearted. But then there is often one thing—one thing behind everything else : I indulge those thoughts ; I do that thing by myself ; I told that lie years ago, and never confessed it ; I broke that commandment (the seventh, it may be), but never, never admitted it. The whole future of life, the whole peace of the mind, and the whole joy in GOD, depends upon my asking whether I did it, and if I did, admitting that it was my fault." Oh, let no brother or sister lose the joy of GOD for want of courage.

(2) That brings me to the second characteristic of GOD which ought to give me joy in GOD, whatever happens, and irrespective of anything that happens at all, and that is GOD'S *wonderful love*. At Cambridge, in the presence of some thousand undergraduates, a few days ago, I tried to convince these young men of this one thing—that GOD loved them, that GOD knows them all one by one ; that when they prayed they had not a little bit of GOD to attend to them, but the whole of GOD ; that He knew them all as if there were not another living person in the world,

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and bent down His whole attention and concentrated His whole love upon them, because, being infinite, He could give Himself wholly to each. And in the hushed silence I believe some of them believed it. Now, what is true of them is true of you. GOD loves you, GOD loves you, GOD loves you, one by one, with all Himself. When you pray, all of GOD attends to you, because He is infinite. All GOD'S love is poured down upon you. You each stand clear to His eye as if there was no other living soul in the world. Is not that something to rejoice about? You do not believe it if you do not rejoice in it, and, if you do believe it, what does anything matter? I put that dilemma to you. You either believe it, in which case nothing matters, or you do not believe it. Ask the HOLY SPIRIT to make you believe it. And it is believing in the love of GOD which makes us penitent. You cannot be scolded into penitence; you cannot be lectured or frightened into penitence. It is only love that melts you into penitence. It was when St. Paul at last knelt at the foot of the Cross, and said, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," that he said, "I am the chief of sinners." And therefore the second thing which I pray may be brought home to you by no earthly agent, but by the HOLY SPIRIT, is that you may say, "GOD loves me, GOD loves me," as if there were not another person in the world. "GOD loves me!" Say it again and again till you believe. And if you do believe it, then I have no fear about your penitence, when once you believe in the light of that love. Examine your life, what you have done, what has been your service, what you have given up for Him,

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what your life has been like, how much you have witnessed for Him, how much trust you have had in Him in your trials. I do not think there is one of you but will say, "O GOD, be merciful to me, a sinner!" But it will be a happy sorrow if it leads you to an altered life.

(3) And then, thirdly, you say: "Oh, well, that is just exactly the point—an altered life. How can I get the past off my back? How can I get it off my conscience? Why, while you have been speaking I have thought of prayer neglected again and again, of boys and girls whom I have influenced wrongly. I look back into my life, and I see that I have done wrong. Is there anything about GOD which you can see which will give me joy, in spite of that?" And I see my third characteristic of GOD, Who will by no means spare the guilty (I quite acknowledge that), but Who keeps "mercy unto thousands of them that love Him."

"Redeemed, restored, forgiven,
Through JESU's precious blood!
Heirs of His home in Heaven,
O praise our pardoning GOD!
Praise Him in tuneful measures,
Who gave His SON to die,
Praise Him whose sevenfold treasures
Enrich and sanctify."

How GOD loves to forgive now! How He has been longing to forgive for years! He cannot forgive until you are penitent. Even GOD cannot do some things, and He cannot forgive the impenitent. They must turn; but when once a soul has turned, when once one of His children has turned round spon-

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taneously, GOD becomes the pardoning GOD. I would love to think that some of you who hear these words would go home for the first time understanding what a pardoning GOD you have. You may divide people into two classes : those who are presuming upon the pardon of GOD, and those who will not believe in it. I had two cases lately. One was a man who presumed upon the pardon of GOD, who meant to go on sinning, and said he did, and thought that GOD would not mind, because he had excused himself to himself, and persuaded himself it did not matter. I ask your prayers for that soul ; we may save that soul. And the other was one who could not believe that something in the past, far away, on the conscience for years, could be pardoned. Thank GOD, that soul believed in the pardon before the end of the interview ! And that is why there is such a true change, when joy has taken the place of misery and unhappiness. Do not follow either of those cases, but with true and honest penitence claim the promised pardon of GOD, and you will have the third cause of joy.

(4) Fourthly, How is that pardon possible ? How was it achieved ? And the answer is : We believe in a sacrificing GOD, in a GOD Who sacrificed Himself. I was up at Euston Station not long ago, addressing one thousand three hundred men, and I found the whole station was ringing with a gallant deed done by a little boy in the employ of the North-Western Railway, who had flung himself under an express train to save two children ; and as he saved the second, the engine actually hit him as it passed. He was called up before the whole staff by the directors,

promoted and rewarded before them all. Now, I put this to you (and in my mind it is a strong argument for those who cannot believe in the sacrifice of GOD) : if that boy could do it, and GOD could not do it, or would not do it, that boy is greater than GOD. He was capable of perfect self-sacrifice, and if GOD is not capable of it, or does not carry it out, that boy is greater than GOD. It has been put most beautifully by one of our great poets, Browning, who, when the shepherd-boy David is looking at Saul, and Saul is in his misery, and David feels a great longing to help him, says :

“Would I suffer for Him Whom I love ?

So wouldst thou, so didst thou.”

And there is no answer to it. Self-sacrifice among men is one of our grandest characteristics. “So wouldst thou, so didst thou.” Of course, GOD sacrificed Himself ! And it is because we believe that He poured out Himself in sacrifice, because it is GOD’S way to save through pain, that we rejoice in GOD. We rejoice in our perfect GOD because He was so capable of perfect self-sacrifice.

(5) Then, fifthly, “How are we to be kept safe ?” You say : “Yes, I follow you, Bishop ; I am to believe in the love of GOD, I am to be pardoned because of the love of GOD ; but after that who is to keep me safe from falling back, look after me day after day, show me each day how to work ?” And we look up again, and we see the patient providence of GOD—GOD Who never leaves us. “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “Underneath are the everlasting arms,”

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as I always quote to those who are going into their operations in Central London. We believe in a keeping GOD. He says : "The law of My Kingdom is Day by Day," and He will keep you day by day, and you never need look any farther. When once we understand the law of "Day by Day," that GOD will keep us day by day, will give us strength day by day, we have learnt the most important lesson. You should read Bishop Wilkinson's "Some Laws in GOD'S Spiritual Kingdom," the new edition of which has just come out. Do not put it down till you have learnt the law of "Day by Day."

(6) Then, lastly—for each of these six things has to be meditated upon and prayed over, one at a time, all through Lent—the sixth characteristic of GOD which makes us joy in GOD every day is the power of GOD. Through the *misereres* of Ash Wednesday I always hear by expectation the high notes of St. Paul's Choir as they will sing on Easter Day :

"Now beyond the sky He's King,

Alleluia !"

I look forward to it all through Lent, and you cannot divorce the truth of Lent from the truth of Easter—that demonstration of power when JESUS CHRIST was raised from the dead, which a great writer has called "the eminent act of GOD'S omnipotency," demonstrating the power of GOD. Where we are deceived is this : we imagine that Satan is stronger than GOD, because GOD cannot put out His power to force man's will ; He has limited Himself to working by love. On Easter Day we see what GOD can do when He likes, when He is free, when He has to deal

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with a soul wholly devoted to Him. On the Resurrection Day we see for ever the glorious power of GOD. "Sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." And therefore I rejoice in the power of GOD. That is enough to make us joy in GOD.

Do you believe in a good GOD ? Do you believe in a loving GOD ? Do you believe in a pardoning GOD ? Do you believe in a self-sacrificing GOD ? Do you believe in the providence of GOD ? Do you believe in the power of GOD ? If you do you must rejoice in GOD. And my prayer for you and for myself is this : that before Easter comes we may, every one of us, men, women, and children, have the joy in GOD which the world can neither give nor take away.

ST. SAVIOUR'S, EALING

SUNDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. I have heard it argued by those who try to disprove the Deity of our LORD that, because He was born without sin, He is unable fully to understand the sins and temptations that come to men from the taint of heredity, and therefore the text "tempted like as we are" is incorrect. What should be the answer to this? Should we believe that He was subject to the taint of heredity through His Mother?

The answer is twofold. The first thing is to be perfectly clear that our LORD had a real human nature. Even well-educated Christians are apt to minimise that in their minds, and in their preaching about it when they preach to others. JESUS CHRIST stands before us a real Man. He had a real body, a real soul, a real human spirit, otherwise the whole thing is an unreal drama. Look at the temptations of JESUS CHRIST through Lent, and see our LORD tempted. And therefore the first thing that the questioner must get hold of is this : that He was really tempted in all points like as we are. He had a real body, a real human nature ; He put Himself down on our level, He fought as one of us, with the very same weapons with which we have to fight every day. That is why His temptation is such a comfort to us. People sometimes, I find, as I go round to great men's meetings in London on the Purity question, blame their bodies, and, if they themselves do not, other people say "poor human nature *must* do this and that," and they get to imagine because

they have a human body, they are bound to sin. Now the answer to that is: "Here is a human body which never sinned at all." There is, therefore, nothing wrong in the body at all. Get rid of that thought if any of you find it at the bottom of your mind. There is nothing whatever wicked in the body—the body was made by GOD; there is nothing wicked but the wicked will, and you may wear that body stainless and without sin; you may yourself fight and conquer the passions of the body. I do not say myself that anyone has actually worn it stainless except JESUS CHRIST, but we must have that as our ideal. There is nothing in the body that makes you sin; it is the will, and not your body, which is to blame.

Then comes the question about the Virgin Birth. Never be persuaded by those who say the Virgin Birth is an unessential and unimportant part of the Christian faith. The Virgin Birth is a great truth revealed to us for this reason: it was by that act—so we believe; we should not have known it, but we have been told it, and as children we believe it—it was by that act that GOD, as it were, broke the entail, to start a new human nature—a perfectly pure spring which He was to put into the human nature already degraded. There was to be a new Adam. And therefore, although I should be the first myself to refuse to say that the Incarnation could not have come in any other way, yet when I am told on certain evidence, which I respect and accept, that JESUS CHRIST was born of a pure virgin, I see great beauty in it; I see that in this way the new Adam might be put into this old corrupt Adam, and be a new spring of life to us. The Virgin Birth of JESUS CHRIST is a revelation, and also a great inspiration.

There are those in another communion than ours with whom we do not hold full communion, because at present we believe they hold doctrines which are not Scriptural—and which were not taught in the early days of the Church—who, out of honour for that blessed Virgin, who was so much honoured as to be the mother of our LORD ("Blessed art thou above women!

Hail, thou that art highly favoured!"), try to add to her honour by adding another doctrine, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. There is no authority for that. I find constantly that people are confusing the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary with the true Scriptural doctrine of the Virgin Birth of our LORD. We do not hold in the Church of England the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, we do not believe it to be right to add a new article of faith which is not and cannot be proved by Holy Scripture, and was not held in the early days of the Church.

I have answered the question, therefore, in three parts, in order to be perfectly clear. CHRIST's was a real human body, and on Ascension Day we get special comfort from that thought. The Virgin Birth was a beautiful idea of GOD to cut the entail of sin, and start as it were an entirely fresh human nature. The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is not a doctrine held by the Church of England.

2. Since the earthquake at Messina I have been much perplexed. Would you kindly explain to me why, if GOD is love and is almighty, and if GOD loves us each individually, did He permit the awful agony of a hundred thousand souls crushed beneath the débris for hours in terrible pain and fright before help could get to them?

I am always very frank in my answers to these questions. I do not pretend to know more than I do, but I like to try and lay the spectres which are brought up to me; and who shall say that this is not a real spectre which we must face? It was said that more people were made atheists by the earthquake in Lisbon than by any other cause. I will answer this question in four compartments, as it were.

(1) First of all, I do not profess to base my belief in the love of GOD upon anything that I see in the world to-day. I do not pretend to explain, for instance, why some young man is taken away to-day in the prime of life, and an old man of eighty left. No one can live very long in the world without seeing the futility of expecting or of trying to explain things

like that. I base my belief in the love of GOD, which I mean to preach to you all through this Mission, upon the Incarnation. I say that was a demonstration of love which was meant to last for all time, and in the strength of it, followed by the Resurrection, we were meant to face the trials and difficulties of life. "Thou must love Me Who hast died for thee." I have said that in the case of the great mass of mankind the happiness in life outweighs the unhappiness nine to one, which it certainly does; but we wanted this great demonstration of love to hold to in the midst of our trials and difficulties. I do not pretend to find my proof of the love of GOD in this difficult, perplexed, and very puzzling world as I see it to-day.

(2) But, secondly, let us clear our minds of a great misunderstanding. Is the death of two hundred thousand people very different from the death that is going on every day? How many do you think die in London every day? One every eight minutes, day and night. That is about two hundred every day. It would be two hundred thousand, I suppose, in the whole world. And therefore are you not making too much of the fact of two hundred thousand dying in one day? Already there are tens of thousands dying. You must ask yourself this: whether you really mean in your mind that the fact of death at all, the fact of these thousands dying every day (earthquake or not), is going to upset your faith in the love of GOD. Now, death helps my belief in the love of GOD. The fact of death is increasing human happiness enormously. Suppose there was no death, what would happen? All the people who were living years ago, and are living now, would go on increasing in numbers on this little planet, and growing older, and older, and older, and we should have lost the most beautiful thing in life, the old grandfather and the little child on his knee, the grandmother and her grandchildren around her. We are apt to lose sight of the fact that the great majority of people to-day enjoy life. I should not wish my nearest and dearest to live on when her faculties were gone, and she was too old to enjoy life. Death gives

us, and secures to us, our best happiness in life. Do you not remember what Phillips Brooks says: "GOD holds the infant like a mother, builds a wall round the strong man, as he fights the noonday battle of his life, and lays the bridge of sunset over which the old man's feet may walk serenely unto the eternal day?"

Death is passing into a sight of even more beautiful things if we have only the faith to believe it. As Mr. Holmes quotes beautifully in his book on "Immortality":

"It is not good that life should know too soon
The lovely secrets kept for those who die."

Therefore I decline to accept the fact of thousands dying in a day as any evidence against the love of GOD. He only made us that so many millions of people might sun themselves in the sunshine of His own happiness; and death makes it possible to have so many more millions of people to enjoy life. They have their probation-time here, and if they did not pass away, there would be no room for the thousands of others to come.

(3) Then comes the next part of the answer: Why should so many die suddenly? I dare say some of you read the geologists' explanation in one of our leading papers of the reason that particular part of the world was so unsafe. It was the last made, the newest bit of earth that has come up and become firm. But we want to answer it not geologically, but theologically. I will tell you what I believe: I believe that all these great things are allowed to happen to prevent us from being drowned in security. We are living, as a matter of fact, upon a quaking jelly, which we call the earth's crust. It is not a solid thing at all. It lasts our time, but only lasts for a time. There is a much greater thing coming than the Messina earthquake—a perfectly inevitable thing—when the earth and all the things therein will be burnt up, when our little planet, struggling away from the sun all the time, but gradually losing its power of keeping away from it, will quite inevitably be drawn into the sun

and be burnt up. Our great danger in the world to-day is to have a totally wrong conception of our condition. We want to feel ourselves on solid earth, and to make our homes here. We drift into the idea that this is the place where we ought to be and to stay ; whereas, as a matter of fact, we are "strangers and pilgrims on this earth." What we ought to understand is that if we are found here when the earth is drawn into the sun we shall be burnt up, so far as our bodies are concerned, with the earth. The reason, I believe, why GOD allows these startling calamities to happen on this little earth is to wake us up to a real idea of our condition. Some are simply going on as if they were going to stay here for ever, living as if they were going to live here for the next ten million years. These things wake us up. We live here for a few passing years, and then—this much you and I do know—the world is all done with, so far as we are concerned. That being the case, "what manner of persons ought we to be," as St. Peter said, "in all holy conversation and godliness, looking forward and hastening to the coming of the day of the LORD, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

I say, then, that while we rush to the rescue of the sufferers, while these great calamities bring out the love and sympathy of the world, let them not move us from our belief in the love of GOD. Death is no argument against the love of GOD ; but let us take warning ourselves. Are we ready for sudden death ourselves ? Are we ready when our turn comes to die ?

II

ST. SAVIOUR'S, EALING

SUNDAY EVENING

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

“Despisest thou the riches of His goodness . . . not knowing that the goodness of GOD leadeth thee to repentance ?”—
ROM. ii. 4.

AT first sight the connection between goodness and penitence is not obvious, but it becomes clearer when we remember this: that what penitence means when you look at the word in the Greek is “a change of mind.” I am certain that some, especially men, are apt to think of Lent as a time when we are to work ourselves up into some strange and exaggerated state. Some people despise the whole thing. Now, repentance, you may almost say, is a prosaic thing; it is so practical, so obviously necessary, that it is not a question of sentiment at all. To repent is to change your mind. Take, for instance, St. Paul—St. Paul changed his mind as to the past, and as to the present, and as to the future. He had imagined that the Christians were mistaken and foolish fanatics. When he repented he changed his mind, and he recognised them as far-sighted heroes, and that he had been the man who was a short-sighted fool. He changed his mind as to the

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present. He had imagined that he was fighting for the righteousness of GOD. When he had been converted, when he had repented, he saw that he was, as a matter of fact, opposing GOD'S darling plan for the human race. He changed his mind as to the future. He had meant to live his life just as a brilliant young Pharisee would have lived it, respected, honoured, going on from honour to honour. When he was converted, when he repented, he made up his mind to live it as a hunted slave of One Who died as a slave on the Cross. And therefore St. Paul's repentance was a complete change of St. Paul's life.

Now, what is the good of this Mission? I know of no good at all unless it is going to end in a change of mind—a change of mind, perhaps, on all points; I venture to say certainly with everyone on some one point. And the difficulty is to have that change of mind.

First of all, we are so terribly dependent upon the opinion of the people among whom we live. Someone came to me not long ago to complain of a calumny with regard to her breaking a certain commandment. I said: "Did you break it?" "Oh yes, I broke it, and I am breaking it, but I am not breaking it in the way I was accused of breaking it at the certain time and in the special method. I would not offend against the convention of the world, as I am accused of doing." I said: "Do you think it makes much difference, if you are breaking that clear command of GOD, which way you are breaking it?" "It makes all the difference," she said.

I believe that points to one of the worst dangers which may prevent any one of us from repenting this Lent Mission. We cannot get rid of the idea that if

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our friends in the office, or our friends in the club, or our friends in the drawing-room which we frequent, do not think a thing wrong, therefore it is not wrong. All the time we are getting dragged down by the opinion of the world. I was reading this very day, in the only quiet hour I had, a sermon of Bishop Wilkinson's (in a course of sermons which you should read, upon "Some Laws in GOD'S Spiritual Kingdom") on the world, and I realised afresh that a Mission is charged with reality. It is not merely preaching or hearing a sermon; the point is to get at grips with human souls. I want to know whether you are really keeping from repentance by saying to yourself: "Well, I dare say it may be wrong, strictly speaking, but my world does not think it wrong, and, anyhow, I am better than the other people." If you hold on to that, not the whole power of GOD can convert you. No; there is a terrible danger of mistaking the views of the world for GOD'S command and GOD'S will.

And again, when you have done a thing very often, your conscience troubles you less at the end of five years than it did five years ago. The awful thing is that a man or woman's conscience may have pricked them about something five years ago. They disregard it, and at the end of five years the thing is just as wrong, but they have done it so often that they have become callous about it. In searching your consciences be straight with yourselves. Be watchful about this: it does not follow that an act is not wrong because you cease to feel it wrong. A thing done over and over again may have deadened your conscience about it.

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And then again repentance, this change of mind, may be such a futile thing, because it is not thorough. The change of mind, to be effectual, has got to be something like this : you have got to look at facts in the face, as the Bishop of Birmingham pointed out a few days ago in scathing words.* He pointed out that Confession really meant this : the looking at the thing that was wrong and admitting it was wrong, not glozing it over with honeyed words, but looking at it, and saying, "It is wrong ; I have done it. I make no excuses for it ; I admit it to be wrong." When we kneel down presently, in the silence, we will think over the past and the present. Do not forget that the devil will try to persuade you, first of all, that other people do not think this particular thing is wrong, and will prevent you all he can from admitting it is wrong to yourself. And, when you have discovered it and have admitted it to be wrong and confessed it to GOD, you have to abandon it, abandon it once and for all. Take the path which is the direct opposite of it, and pursue that path to the end. That is what a real change of mind is. Unless all this change is going on, it is not real penitence. St. Paul's was real penitence, because he changed the whole of his attitude, the whole of his character and ideas.

Now comes the question for to-night : What is going to produce that ? Some people would say "Fear." "If you are a wise man, Bishop," they would say, "preach your Mission on Hell-fire, the only thing that really frightens people ; preach to them about punishment ; preach to them about the in-

* At the Quiet Day for the West End Clergy in St. Paul's Cathedral just before Lent.

evitable end of the wicked." And I am the first to admit that, human nature being constituted as it is, we do not preach the full Gospel unless we point out the inevitable end, both in this world and the next, of selfishness, wickedness, and sin. If you go on with that hidden dishonesty, you will be disgraced ; it is sure to come out. If I am not putting it as the great motive, I do not leave out fear. You will lose your reputation, you will be disgraced, you will lose your home, you will ruin your happiness, if you go on drinking ; you will make everyone dislike you and hate you if you go on telling lies behind their backs ; you will harden yourself into a state of godlessness if you do not soon begin to say your prayers ; you will find the voice of religion growing weaker and weaker if you go on turning your back on church and Holy Communion. I do not leave out the fear. It is my business to point it out. I should not preach the full Gospel if I did not. Die unrepentant, with that sin in your right hand, and you will be punished after death. The New Testament is a very stern book. It would be a terribly unjust thing if a man was not punished when he ruins some poor creature and casts him or her away. If there was no GOD waiting for him on the other side of death, what a miserably unjust world it would be ! I say that in all love ; but I do not put my faith in fear to make you repent.

Other people would say : " Point out that this thing that is being done is dead against GOD'S commandments." I have tried that. I tried it on that very person of whom I spoke. No effect at all ! The only answer was, and would be :

“ Well, Bishop, of course you are bound to look at these things from the point of view of religion. We do not look at things quite like that ; we look at them from the point of view of the world.” I do not feel at all that merely pointing out that this or that is against GOD’S command, as a matter of fact, does produce penitence. What does, then ? *The goodness of GOD.* (It is the goodness of GOD that leadeth us to repentance. Let me show you how goodness does lead to repentance. A young man came to me some years ago. I saw from his conversation that he was in great danger. He was playing with fire ; he was going into society and companionship which I knew perfectly well at his age was most dangerous. I pointed out to him exactly the danger, but I failed to persuade him. I saw nothing of him for three years. When I saw him again, he was a penitent ; but what had made him a penitent ? Seeing himself and all that he had done those three years in the good eyes of the girl whom he had at last learned to love. He had seen what goodness was at last ; and as he saw in the good eyes of that good Christian girl what goodness was, he saw himself, he saw what he was, he saw what he had been, and he would have given his right hand that day not to have done during those three years what I warned him he would do three years before. Goodness had led him to repentance.)

Or take a recent play. I have very little time, you can well imagine, to see a play, but I was glad last year to see a certain play, called “ The Passing of the Third Floor Back.” It was as fine a sermon on the power of goodness in producing

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repentance as I have ever heard ! Into a squalid lodging-house, where all was cheating and want of charity, lying and lust, a real hell on earth, there came—what ? There came a good man, who took the third floor back, the smallest room in the house. And the influence of that good man upon every one of his fellow-lodgers was the point of the play. He brought them to a sense of penitence and change of life, first by contrast, second by attraction, and thirdly by inspiration.

(1) First, by contrast. As they saw this good man moving among them they felt that they were a very miserable lot of men and women. Spite and jealousy and cheating were seen in their true light. He touched the goodness that was in them, appealed to the good as he went round, and the good came out. They all wanted to be good at the bottom of their hearts, and the good came out, and they began to try and be the good men and women they were meant to be. Now, what in a play that good man did, JESUS CHRIST can do with us in glorious reality. He is the incarnation of the goodness of GOD. There standeth to-night amongst us One Whom we see not, One Who is able to do those three things to every man and woman, every boy and girl. If I want to repent, if I want to change my mind and get more and more determined to be good, I must look at JESUS CHRIST, I must notice how perfectly faultless, perfectly loving, perfectly patient, perfectly ready to spend Himself in the service of others, He is. I shall see also where I fail to bear the reflection of JESUS CHRIST, not only in JESUS CHRIST Himself, but in the best

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man or the best woman I know. Look at yourself in that mirror also : are you like that ? There is no other way to being ashamed of yourself, except to see yourself compared to someone ten times better, living a life of equal difficulty, much more generous, loving, and unselfish. Those people are reflecting JESUS CHRIST. It is to realise their goodness and our contrast to them which is the first step.

(2) Then, secondly, He will bring us to repentance by attraction. You do want to be good, do you not ? You do want to be a better man. You would like to be a strong, honourable, noble Christian man ; you would like to be an unselfish Christian woman. Then, you can be. If no one else believes in you, JESUS CHRIST believes in you, and He will direct this Mission to the good in you. Do not give yourself up. " GOD shall forgive thee all but thy despair." And therefore, in the quiet, I want you to let the good in you rise to the good that is in JESUS CHRIST ; He will speak to the good in you. I was reading to-day to the choir-boys of the Chapel Royal, who come to me on this particular Sunday between their services, ■ charming little story out of a book called " The Golden Windows." It brings home how absolutely independent sainthood is of our condition of life. We are apt to think sometimes that we cannot be saints if we are in a very lowly position of life. To this idea is directed one of the stories in that book. Two spirits were in the other world. One felt quite at home—a strong, brave spirit in this other world. Another, a poor, trembling, miserable spirit, felt quite lost, and was clinging to this strong spirit. The weak spirit said : " I was a rich woman

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in the earth-life ; I had everything—many servants to serve me. But I feel so cold, so out of it, in this other world.” The other said : “ I feel so happy here, so much at home.” “ Oh, do help me ! ” said the weak one ; and as she looked into the eyes of the other spirit, she said : “ Why, I seem to recognise you ; your features are familiar to me. Did I know you in the earth-life ? I do not remember you among the noble ladies and friends I knew then.” “ No,” said the other, “ you did not know me then as a friend ; I was your washerwoman.”

What I say to you—perhaps some of you quite humble in life, servants in some house or other—is that CHRIST tells you you may be good, good as the best, and He wants to attract you to be good. It is the goodness of GOD that leads you to repentance.

(3) And, lastly, He does it, and He will do it, by inspiration. As I look with the eye of faith at the good LORD in our midst to-day, coming to seek and to save us all, loving us all, I like to feel that that goodness is not something afar off, but something that I may have within me, that He will make my sinful body clean by His Body, and wash my soul with His most precious Blood, that I may be a partaker of the Divine nature. He is not standing here, so good, to mock us. This is the great truth : He can make us good ! Oh, to be more like JESUS every day, to lose all the bad temper, all the selfishness and the jealousy, and become pure, and true, and loving, and strong every day. That is the glorious possibility for every man and woman. Let the goodness of GOD lead you to repentance, and you are on a path which will make you one day a saint in Heaven.

ST. SAVIOUR'S, EALING

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The first questions are on the practical difficulties of life ; then come theoretical difficulties about free-will and punishment ; then difficulties about GOD.

1. The first is evidently a difficulty from a very honest conscience, from one who is in a good situation, but who has to make money at the expense of other people, because the business is apparently a dishonest one and likely to ruin a great number of people. Although the writer is merely the hand that takes and writes the letters connected with it, is she implicated or not in the dishonesty ?

That is a very hard question, seeing that she is supporting her mother by her earnings. I can only say that a similar question was asked twenty years ago by a man who was earning four pounds a week. It was a great question whether or not he should give up the business. He was not really responsible for it, but he was a servant in it. I remember referring the question to Bishop Templ , as he then was Bishop of London, and he gave a very characteristic answer : " Let him obey his conscience." He did give up his business. He gave up his post, but I am thankful to say that within about a month he was in a better one ; GOD blessed the absolute sacrifice of his post for conscience' sake. I would only say to this questioner that, at any rate, it is better to look out for a post where your conscience will be

less tried than it is. I should not like to say that the actual dictating of letters makes you an accomplice in the dishonesty of the business; but it will be much better if you obey your conscience as that man did, and, even if it is a worse post, go somewhere where you feel happier in your conscience with regard to the work.

2. Does not putting into a prayer, "If it be Thy will," do away with the faith of the prayer?

I do not think that it does at all. I should not like to pray a prayer that was not according to GOD'S will. What an awful thing to think that we could change GOD'S will to suit our whim! I should be afraid to pray at all! I should not dare to do so if I thought by my prayer I was going to alter GOD'S will for me or for anybody else. GOD'S will is sure to be the best. We co-operate with the will of GOD by our prayer. We make it more possible for the will of GOD to be done. GOD always wants the best for His children, and therefore putting in this condition does not hamper your prayer the least in the world. Pray according to the will of GOD. It makes your prayer a safe one, because if it is not for the best GOD will not grant it.

3. Can you account for the unnecessary suffering of animals?

Undoubtedly nine-tenths of the animal creation is happy. You must always remember that they do not foresee the pain or the death that may be coming; no rabbit, or any other animal that is going to be shot perhaps five minutes afterwards, knows that it is going to be shot. This is one of the fears which haunt people quite unnecessarily. Ask any independent naturalist, not from the point of view of religion at all, but as a matter of fact, whether the animal creation is not, nine-tenths of it at any rate, perfectly happy, and he will certainly tell you that it is.

4. A poor woman is eternally haunted with the idea that before her husband's death she almost desired that the long suffering should come to an end, from the terrible irksomeness and sadness of seeing him in pain. Was that a sin?

That sin is entirely forgiven long ago. You cannot do a worse dishonour to GOD than by going on imagining that He has not forgiven you that sin. It is all done with. GOD has forgiven you years ago. Is GOD a kind of god who would be likely to keep this against you all your life? Come into the "Joy of the LORD."

5. Someone thinks that I have said, "Do you feel good? Is goodness merely a feeling?"

It would be the very last thing I should have dreamed of saying. Goodness does not depend upon feeling good. What I say is: "Do you want to *be* good?" "Are you anxious to be good like the good GOD?" Let the questioner be quite clear in his mind that it is not a question of feeling. I believe myself that some people are miserable in our Church, and in other Christian bodies, by imagining that religion is feeling. It is nothing of the kind. We walk by faith, and not by feeling. The love of GOD, the grace of the Sacraments, answers to prayer are all beautiful realities; they are not a state of feeling. You may not feel them at all. I spent half an hour one day trying to persuade an excellent man, who was very miserable and morbid, about his religion, that if he would only have a little healthy faith, he would not want to talk about feeling at all. We put up the hand of faith and hold on to these things, and we need not worry ourselves perpetually as to whether we feel aright.

6. The difficulty of free-will.

This is really a very old difficulty; and I may say at once I cannot go in detail into all the difficulties that I have had in previous Missions. All the addresses and answers of these

Missions are published in books.* You will find in them all the answer I can give to these difficulties about free-will, and as to whether, as Judas or somebody else must have betrayed our LORD, Judas ought to be blamed at all. There are several questions sent in about free-will, and I will just sum them up in one answer, and that is that, as a matter of fact, we have received free-will. And if we are people who have received free-will, we are free to go wrong if we are free to go right. We cannot have it both ways. GOD saw fit to create men and women who are not like clocks or puppets, but are men and women with free-will. Therefore most of the evils that we see, and the mischief and sin that we see, come from perverted free-will. Take Judas for instance: the fact that it may have been foreseen in the omniscience of GOD that he would betray our LORD did not make him any less free not to do so. The reconciling of freedom with omniscience is a very old difficulty. We presume that GOD knows what you and I are going to do to-morrow morning; but you and I are perfectly free to do or not to do it; it makes no difference. We are left free agents to repent or not to repent to-night. GOD knows whether we are going to repent, but we are perfectly free to do it. And therefore we are only tying ourselves up in an unnecessary knot. You will find that is the case with many religious difficulties: people tie themselves up into a knot over them. Judas was left free, and he perverted his free-will to betray our LORD. Therefore Judas "went to his own place." We are going to speak about hell in a few moments, but the Church has never laid it down as a matter of faith that Judas is lost. He is called in the Bible the "son of perdition," but you must always remember to be very accurate as to what the Church has laid down as a matter of faith, and when it is said that Judas "went to his own place," all it means is that he went to the place which he had prepared for himself by his own deliberate choice.

* Uniform with this volume—"A Mission of the SPIRIT," "The Call of the FATHER," and "The Love of the TRINITY."

7. Do we really have free-will ?

My answer is that in any case we treat everyone as if he were free. I used very often to take an instance to working-men, which always appealed to them. There used to be in old days a good deal of discussion on this point among working-men, and it was stated that you could not help doing a thing if you were fated to do it, and that therefore you could not be responsible. I said: "Now, supposing for the third time one of your fellow-men stole your dinner which you had brought to work and kept hidden away, would you take the excuse that he could not help it? No, you would not; you know perfectly well no one would. You would treat him as responsible." And the common sense of mankind treats us as responsible. Therefore, as a matter of fact, we treat one another exactly in the same way as GOD treats us—as responsible people.

8. How shall I answer those who say that every soul, however wickedly it has lived in this life, passes to a state in which it is given an opportunity to move along the upward way to holiness, so that it will eventually reach perfection and therefore happiness, and that all is right in the end, and it makes no difference how anyone lives ?

Now, what one must remember is this, that the theory that evil is an undeveloped form of good is not Scriptural teaching. You remember what is said in the Bible—"An enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat," and, as a matter of fact, wrong is dead opposed to right. It is not an undeveloped form of evil; it is dead opposed to it. The tares are there: there is mischief in the world. We men and women have a battle to fight. It is most misleading teaching that evil is an undeveloped form of good.

9. No one can doubt that Satan has the attributes of omniscience and omnipresence; otherwise he would not

be able to adapt his temptations exactly at the weak points, exactly at the right time, to an infinite number of people. Did GOD therefore confer this power on him?

I absolutely deny that Satan is either omniscient or omnipresent. It is one of the greatest mistakes that we can make. Satan is a finite spirit. He is allowed a certain power for a time, but he is not omnipotent like GOD; he is not omniscient. He has tempted a great many people, and he has a great experience—he has experience of human nature—and therefore knows the weakest spots where to attack us, and where is the best chance for him to succeed. But he is not omnipotent or omniscient.

“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

Therefore, I would like you girls, perhaps feeling very weak, you lads in the midst of the battle of life, you men with the haunting temptations which you have, to remember when Satan is tempting you that the strength of GOD can make you ten thousand times stronger than Satan. He is a finite spirit; he has been beaten on the Cross and his power has been crushed, and we have only to follow up a victory which has been won for us by JESUS CHRIST Himself.*

10. What is the belief of the Church with regard to eternal punishment? Is it possible to reconcile that thought with an all-loving GOD?

I recommend you very much to read this Lent Mr. Holmes's book on “Immortality.” I read to-day a chapter on Hell in that book which I think would help you, and I have put down the chief points in it that I might pass them on to you. The first point is that all this horrible description of hell and its physical tortures, which have been dwelt upon in

* The whole subject of “Temptation” is dealt with more fully on pp. 234-248.

many sermons and by many writers, is not Scriptural at all. We have inherited that from Milton and Dante and other writers and painters. All this account of the tortures of the damned, the physical tortures of the damned, you will not find in Holy Scripture at all. That is the first point. Then you go on a little farther, and you say: "Well, what does Holy Scripture teach us?" It teaches us three things. It teaches the doctrine of eternal punishment. Æonian punishment is spoken of again and again in Holy Scripture, and, if you come to think of it, so long as the sin is æonian, the punishment must be æonian too. In one place we pray to be delivered from æonian or eternal sin. A great writer says, "When self-will ceases hell ceases." But the awful thing about which our LORD was warning us was that the will might be so bent the wrong way that it would not be able to turn at all. All through, Scripture distinctly lays down that there is such a thing as æonian punishment; it does not say how many will inherit it.

The second point is that Holy Scripture nowhere reveals what that punishment is.

Thirdly, everywhere Holy Scripture reveals that, whatever it is, it will be consistent with the GOD of love.

Then come three other points which I think will help us very much. We notice that hell is compared in the New Testament to Gehenna. Now what was Gehenna? Gehenna was the fire outside Jerusalem which burnt up the offal and defilement of the city which were cast upon it. There were three things about Gehenna: it was placed outside the holy city; it was placed where the offal and defilement was burnt; it was not outside the government of the Roman Empire. Now, Mr. Holmes says very truly in these three points hell is like Gehenna. It is outside the holy city; secondly, it is a place where the morally infectious are kept from harming others; but, thirdly, it is not outside the government of the just and loving GOD. In other words, GOD is the GOD of hell as well as the GOD of Heaven. And that makes all the difference. We have been erecting in our minds two gods,

one called the devil, and the other called GOD. This is impossible ! GOD is love behind hell as well as behind Heaven, and therefore we must get out of what is really the old Manichæan heresy of imagining there are two gods, one the devil and the other GOD. GOD who shows such wonderful power is the GOD of hell as well as the GOD of Heaven ; and just as Gehenna was not outside the government of the Roman Empire, though outside the holy city, so hell is not outside the government of GOD. Therefore the thing to hold on to is this, that GOD is not justice to some and love to others, but that GOD is justice and love to everybody ; hell is not like Norfolk Island in the old days where criminals were turned loose to look after themselves. Those who are in hell, whatever hell is, are still under the government and under the care of GOD. As Bishop Bickersteth says so beautifully in one of his books : " There is room for the display towards even the crushed and humble ones of that everlasting mercy which is the emerald rainbow around the throne of GOD."

11. When JESUS was on earth, was another Person in Heaven ?

Of course, GOD the FATHER was in Heaven. At the baptism of our LORD, GOD the FATHER is in Heaven and speaks : the HOLY SPIRIT descends in bodily form as a dove.

12. "Lead us not into temptation." Is it not cowardly to get out of the way whenever we think things are going to get on our nerves ?

The truth of the matter really is that probably the old version of the LORD's Prayer gives the meaning. What we mean is this : " Let not Temptation be too hot for us." GOD does not tempt anybody ; we are told that particularly.

13. Is there any proof of the shaking of the earth at the time of our LORD's death ?

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in A.D. 315, says: "To this day Golgotha is a proof of it. Where the rocks were rent on account of CHRIST, they are still rent." It would not be right to reject the testimony of travellers to the fact of extraordinary rents and fissures in the rocks at the spot. And when anybody asks what evidence is there in the Roman histories of the death of CHRIST, we must always remember that well-known passage in Tacitus, where he says: "JESUS CHRIST was put to death when Tiberius was Emperor and Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea." There stands our LORD JESUS CHRIST in the midst of Roman history.

14. How can the Supreme SPIRIT be propitiated by the death of an innocent victim?

That is wholly a misconception. The old idea that the death of CHRIST was a penalty paid to the devil was exploded long ago. GOD the FATHER loves sinners as much as GOD the SON, and GOD the SON hates the sin as much as GOD the FATHER. The Atonement is a joint plan of the HOLY TRINITY; the broken law had to be satisfied; and what we see is the satisfaction of the broken law in the perfect obedience unto the death. You will find all that drawn out in my Instruction on the Atonement in the Central London Mission.*

15. Do I really believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary has been born in sin?

That begs the question. The ordinary processes of nature are not sinful at all. There is no sin about the body and the arrangements of the body, or the plan of GOD for the propagation of the human race. It is all the beautiful plan and the idea of GOD Himself. It would have been quite possible for the Incarnation to have taken place by a natural process of birth. We believe in the Virgin Birth of CHRIST because it is revealed to us; but the Virgin Birth of JESUS CHRIST is

* See "The Love of the TRINITY," Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., Ltd.

a totally different doctrine from the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Questioners mix them up. The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is a modern Roman doctrine, which has no basis in Scripture, and therefore we are not in any way derogating from the personal honour of the Blessed Virgin (who was chosen out of all women for this supreme honour) in believing that she was born in the ordinary way.

16. What is meant by "Take not Thy HOLY SPIRIT from us" ?

That is founded upon the Scriptural warnings, "Grieve not the SPIRIT," "Quench not the SPIRIT." Take this Mission service. The awful thing is, that the HOLY SPIRIT may be leading someone here to repentance and to a change of life. That person may refuse to obey. He quenches, he grieves the SPIRIT ; he tries to drive the SPIRIT away ; and when we sing in that lovely hymn,

" Return, O HOLY DOVE, return,
Sweet messenger of Rest,"

it is just the prayer we ought to have at a Mission, because although the HOLY SPIRIT is never totally driven away, many of us, by want of obedience, have silenced His voice ; and we want His voice to sound again and win us to a better life.

III

ST. SAVIOUR'S, EALING

WEDNESDAY EVENING

HOW TO REPENT

“Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.”—2 Cor. vii. 10.

THE message of the Mission is “Joy in GOD.” My business is to try and help every soul to “joy in GOD.” That is what we were meant to have. We pray daily, “Make Thy chosen people joyful.” And for this week, out of the six causes for “Joy in GOD—the Goodness of GOD, the Love of GOD, the Forgiveness of GOD, the Sacrifice of GOD, the Care of GOD, and the Power of GOD—it is the *goodness* of GOD which is to lead us to repentance. That is the message for you in Ealing.

Now comes the question, How are you to repent? I picture it like this: You went home on Sunday night, and, by GOD’S Grace, had some glimmering—at any rate, more than you had before—of how extraordinarily good GOD was, and what a glorious thing goodness was, and what a happy thing it would be to be a good man or a good woman, and that really you might be one. If since then you have been in earnest, and have been thinking it over and

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praying over it, what is to be the first step to your being a better man or a better woman than you were ? “I should like to be good,” you say. “I know I have got to live with the good. If I have got to live with GOD, I have got to live with the very good. I am not to be a mere pardoned felon ; I have to be a holy saint. If I am to live for ever amid the pure, the holy, and the true, I must not have these bad thoughts, I must not have this low standard, I must not join in this filthy talk, I must not backbite my neighbours.” That is the kind of thing that ought to have been going on in my mind and yours.

Therefore, the question that you are ready for now, and that I ought to be able to answer for you, is, How am I to repent ? “The goodness of GOD leadeth me to repentance.” *How am I to repent ?*

(1) First of all, let us be certain that we have got as far as this. What I am going to say will have no meaning whatever except to someone who has a divine discontent with themselves. Are you still content with yourself ? When you take even a white thing, which we think white in the shadow, and put it against the driven snow, that white thing looks quite dirty. I want you to think of the best man and the best woman you know, and compare your life with theirs ; then say : “Well, I know I am not as good as that man : I am not as unselfish, I am not as straight and honest. He never speaks against his neighbour, but I do ; why should not I be like that man ?” It is the goodness, the attractiveness of goodness, that leadeth people to repentance. I want to stir up a divine discontent with yourselves ; I want to stir it up in myself ;

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I want to try and be a much better man, and to give a much more perfect service to GOD, and to be free of all my faults. I want to have a divine discontent with myself; and may the HOLY SPIRIT give us all that! That is the first step. Self-satisfaction, self-complacency—can GOD help us if we are pleased with ourselves? No: we cannot then get on at all.

(2) Then, having got this divine discontent by comparing ourselves with real goodness, by comparing the comparatively white with the driven snow, what is the next thing? Why, to find out where we are really wrong. It is not a thing to be done in five minutes. My first question, then, is, Are you satisfied with yourself? And you say: "Well, I am not. I have got as far as that." The next question is, "Where am I wrong?" And that you will have to find out. I want to help you to find out by telling you of this simple plan: Get alone as soon as you can. It is not too easy for you, but I have no doubt you can quietly by yourself take a pencil and a bit of paper and think over your past life—think over the time when you were a little boy or girl; then take the time when you went to school; then take the time between the period you were at school and the period when you were quite grown up and went into the world; then the time since you have been in business or since you were married, if you are married. Divide your life up into some two or three periods. Then take the Commandments, and, remember, do not take the mere dry words, but think over what they mean. Those Commandments explained by JESUS CHRIST show what you were meant to be,

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what I was meant to be—a GOD-fearing man, one who does not make images of GOD to himself which almost cause dislike, but one who understands what GOD'S character is. That is what the second Commandment warns me against—making perverted images—images of a cruel, capricious GOD. Of course, I could not love a GOD like that, nor could anyone else. Or, again, taking GOD'S name in vain—how have I spent my Sundays? What have I been at home? Have I kept all my good manners and politeness for other people in the club or in society? What sort of husband, or son, or daughter, or wife, or sister have I been? What I was meant to be is contained in the fifth Commandment. Have I ever murdered anyone's soul? Is any boy or girl worse for me and my influence? Then GOD have mercy upon me. How have I kept the seventh Commandment in thought, not only in act and word? Am I keeping it as JESUS CHRIST meant it to be kept? Am I keeping it now? What is my life like? Am I obeying the law of purity, which is meant to be obeyed here, to prepare me for a perfectly pure Heaven, where I hope to live? Is my life like that? Am I perfectly honest in the City? am I perfectly honest with other people's reputations as well as their money? What about my tongue? what about repeating stories to one another against other people, without having the slightest idea whether they are true or not, in order to make a good story? Am I in a state of chronic discontent about what I have got? All those are obvious questions. I am merely suggesting them as springing straight out of the Commandments. Am I, in other words, the GOD-fearing, pure, unselfish,

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honourable, and contented man I was meant to be ? I have to find that out by asking the HOLY SPIRIT to bring home the standard of character as sketched in the Commandments, and also in the Beatitudes such as "Blessed are the pure in heart ; blessed are the merciful," and then just put down on paper where we have failed to be those things, and perhaps still fail to be. "No, I am a bad-tempered man at home ; no, I have not kept that ; no, I am the man who did that ; I did influence that person wrongly—I did it, and there was no excuse about it ; it was my grievous fault." Find it out. That is the second thing.

(3) Then comes the third thing. (I am answering the question, remember, "How to repent?"—a very necessary question—one that wants a very clear answer.) We have to *confess* whatever is wrong. And here comes all the controversy about how we are to confess it. What always strikes me as so extraordinary is this, that all the controversy is about the almost—I was going to say—unimportant point, or at least a secondary point, about confession. The primary point is, which people think is so easy, that we have to confess all this out to a holy, omniscient, great, loving GOD ; and we say : "Oh, that is easy enough !" One who would naturally have great diffidence in making confession to anybody else seems to think that it is nothing to confess to GOD. That is the awful part of it. It only shows what a great hold the world has over us, and how very much more real to us man is compared to the living GOD ; it is not confessing to the living GOD that we mind. Now, remember this, that, whatever way you confess

your sin, whether you are going to confess to GOD by yourself, or whether you are going to confess to GOD in the presence of your mother or friend, or one of GOD'S ministers, it is always to GOD all the time. When people say, "I am going to make my confession to somebody," they are making a very great mistake. They are using very mischievous, misleading language. No confession is of the slightest good if it is not made to GOD. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned"—I heard a girl in agony utter that once—"against Thee only have I sinned." And it is only as we realise that our confession is made to GOD, whether it is going to be by ourselves or in the presence of someone else, that we have even an elementary idea of confession. Therefore we have to tell out our sins one by one to GOD, and to admit them to be wrong: "I did this of my own most grievous fault." That is the third stage of repentance.

(4) Then comes the question as to whether or not it is advisable or allowable to confess your sin in the presence of another. What did St. James mean, I have been asked, in saying, "Confess your faults one to another"? Is there not something in our instinct that makes us say: "That is a true instruction"? Do not you know—I am talking now without reference to the particular way you may have been brought up—the longing you have sometimes for somebody else's advice? How many a man's burden is intolerable until he goes and tells somebody—it may be his father—something that has been on his mind for years. It does not seem to be enough satisfaction or relief to speak only to

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GOD by ourselves, even if we have got as far as that. A great evangelical said to me the other day, "You know, I hear thousands of confessions in my own way," and I was perfectly prepared to understand what he meant. People came and talked to him about the perplexities and the inmost concerns of their souls. He was perfectly right; he heard in his own way numberless confessions, because the instinct to make confession in the presence of someone when there is something on your mind is almost overpowering to the human mind. Therefore we are most grateful and thankful for being members of the Church of England, which in her Prayer - Book so freely allows, and even encourages, those who have anything on their mind not to scruple to use the ministry of her priests to get that off their mind. Of course, you have had read to you, I suppose dozens of times, the instruction in the rubric at the Holy Communion, in which you are told how to prepare yourself, or make your confession to GOD: "If a man cannot by this means quiet his conscience, then let him come to some discreet and learned minister of GOD'S Word and open his grief, that by the ministry of GOD'S Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution," and so on. Let us disabuse our minds altogether of any idea that there is anything either wrong, extraordinary, exaggerated, superstitious, or mischievous in availing ourselves of what our human instinct demands in some form or other if we really have something on our mind. I have seen for years the extraordinary relief to the mind when something has, perhaps, been oppressing it, when a man has gone through his past, and then comes and tells to

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GOD (it is not to any man) that "I have sinned in this way or in that"; then the word of absolution is given him by GOD'S ambassador; then the burden rolls off him, and he takes a new start altogether. No one who has seen that in countless Missions for the last twenty years but can entirely believe that our Church was right in leaving liberty to her sons and daughters for what is often such an immense relief to the conscience. Of course, like all good things, there are many ways of misusing this blessing. I think myself that Canon Body, in his book called "The Guided Life," really gave us some beautiful help about that. He tells us—and it is a great help to those who have to help others in their difficulties—that our aim must be this: never to leave any person dependent upon us, but to leave all dependent upon JESUS CHRIST Himself. Therefore, in my opinion, to allow, except quite for a short time, very frequent confession is a mistake. Persons who are too often coming to you are resting upon you too much; you have to lead them on, and gently disentangle their grasp from you, and fasten it upon their Divine Master. The Good Shepherd alone can guide souls. I would urge you to watch this very carefully. In some churches the reaction in favour of confession has set in too strongly, and you find people who imagine that they cannot go on for a fortnight or a month without running to make their confession to their priest or confessor. They are weakening their characters undoubtedly by it. Therefore we must remember that, while our mother Church, knowing the need of her sons, allows a freedom with regard to this; on the other hand, we can misuse that freedom to our

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own soul's harm. So, again, we must never make any soul sad that GOD has not made sad. We must never so preach confession as to make souls, after it has been put before them quite clearly, and yet they do not wish to make use of it, imagine they are sinning against light or against GOD. The statement in the first Prayer-Book is to this effect : Let not those who make use of this blame those who do not, and let not those who do not use it look askance at those who do. That was the purport of it ; it exactly represents the idea of our Church. The very beauty of the thing is its freedom. Therefore do not let us go back in any slavish spirit to what was meant to be a great help to any under the sense of the domination of sin.

(5) Now comes the fifth point : Whether by ourselves or in the presence of another, that confession must be made with restitution. What hypocrisy it is to confess that we have been dishonest, and yet not to make restitution, or to say, " We have done this person harm," and not try our best to undo it ! In a successful Mission there are things restored constantly all over the parish which have been taken wrongfully, and little acts of apology made and reputations restored, and other things done, because restitution is part of repentance.

(6) Then, again, besides restitution, there must be amendment. It is hypocrisy to confess a thing as sin unless you turn from it. I am very much afraid about confession becoming a form. Confession ought always to imply amendment ; and, although we may fall again and again, and yet be really improving, it is quite true that if we make our confession again and again without any improvement, we are being for-

given too cheaply. I remember that was Archbishop Temple's great fear about the practice of auricular confession—"you are being forgiven too cheaply." And of course you are, if you imagine that you can sin and sin again, and be forgiven again, and never make any improvement ; there is something utterly wrong : you are turning the whole thing into a form. Real confession must be attended not only by restitution, but by amendment—a real and true amendment of the fault.

(7) Again, it must be accompanied by throwing ourselves into the contrary virtue, that is, into a life of service.

(8) And, lastly, never forget this : that the stream that flows up to forgiveness as penitence flows underneath for the rest of our lives as contrition. I have been asked a question, which showed the questioner was deeply moved, how it was that this Lent a soul which had been forgiven in the last Lent Mission felt the sin very much more now than last Lent. That is absolutely true to the experience of the work of grace. You will find in the book of Canon Body's on " Contrition " that we see a thing more plainly after it is forgiven. You have not to wait to see it very, very plainly to confess it ; you must confess it when you have seen it, whether you are sorry or not. If you are sorry enough to confess and to abandon it, that is enough for forgiveness ; but contrition is seeing the same thing in the light of being forgiven, and seeing how much you have been forgiven. " She to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much." There is a certain beautiful joy in contrition, because you look back to see how much was forgiven. The sin is for-

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given—there must be no disbelieving of that—but contrition for it will send me into a life of forbearance and humility and loving service which nothing else can do at all.

That, very roughly, is how to repent. Will you repent? You cannot have the joy of GOD unless you repent. It is only the first step. As we kneel down quietly together, may the HOLY SPIRIT stir up a resolution to do this—to do it to-night, to at least begin it to-night, and my prayer for you all is, “May the goodness of GOD lead thee to repentance.”

ST. MARY'S, ACTON

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The first question arises from a misconception of my answer to a question about the Immaculate Conception.*

1. Several writers have imagined that the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary—a doctrine which I explained was not a doctrine of the Church of England—is the same as the Virgin Birth of our Lord, a doctrine held by our Church and repeated every time we say the Creed.

My answer, as reported in some portion of the Press, was a perversion of the Roman Catholic doctrine, or seemed to imply a perversion. I am most anxious to be fair to all opinions from which I differ; therefore, I should like to quote, from a Roman Catholic Catechism sent me, to the effect that the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary means the belief that Mary was conceived and born without the taint of original sin. And in another catechism it is stated "Free from the stain of original sin. By the Immaculate Conception we mean that the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her existence, was by special privilege of GOD preserved from original sin." This doctrine was promulgated as an article of faith by Pope Pius IX. in 1854. The Roman Catholic doctrine is not that the Virgin Mary was born in any but the ordinary way, but that there was a special miracle wrought, and she was born without original sin. This is not supported, in my opinion, by Holy Scripture,

* See page 40.

and is not an article of our faith in the Church of England.

2. Is the Church of England, as a branch of the Christian Church, bound by the practice and beliefs of another branch of the Church—say, the Roman Catholic? Is it not allowable for her to formulate her own teaching regarding Holy Communion?

We are bound by the Holy Scripture and by the teaching of the primitive Church, and we believe that in our Church we have the purest doctrine founded on Holy Scripture, and that we hold the original teaching of the Christian Church.

3. May a person be present at the Holy Communion without communicating by partaking of the elements?

The Holy Communion service is written for, and implies, *Holy Communion*. But, on the other hand, that may be pressed too far—that is to say, there would be no harm whatever in a regular communicant staying on any occasion when he or she was not going to communicate. Many a person communicates in the morning at eight, and stays to a later celebration, when, of course, they would not communicate. They stay and join their prayers with the Church, and intercede for others, and plead the one great sacrifice offered on the Cross.

4. I understand that persons who attend celebrations of the Holy Eucharist look upon this as a sacrifice. Is this right?

The answer, of course, is a quite plain one, and should not divide the Church at all. Everybody who understands what he is talking about knows there is only one sacrifice for sin, and that was offered by JESUS CHRIST once for all, but in the Holy Communion we plead the one sacrifice. Just as Joseph's brethren held up the blood-stained coat of Joseph to show the father that Joseph was dead, or to tell him it mutely,

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so in the Holy Communion we hold up the sacrifice of our LORD :

“ Look, FATHER, look on His anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him ;
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim ;
For lo ! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy SON our LORD.”

We plead the one sacrifice. That is the only sense in which there is a sacrifice in the Holy Communion. Those who are trying to divide the Church under the idea that anyone in the Church of England holds that the Sacrifice of the Cross is being repeated in the Holy Communion are making a mistake. When you go to Communion you do two things : you plead the sacrifice, and you feed on the sacrifice.

5. What is the meaning of GOD hardening Pharaoh's heart ?

Of course, the answer is that, in the Old Testament, things are always spoken of as if GOD did them directly. In one place it is said that GOD gave people over to bad passions ; in another place it is said, “ They gave themselves over ” ; when therefore it is said “ GOD hardened Pharaoh's heart,” we must understand it in a similar sense. For instance, we hear His message and say we do not mean to obey it. You might say that GOD had hardened your heart. But it would not be fair to blame GOD for hardening your heart ; and it is not fair to blame GOD for hardening Pharaoh's heart. He had free-will, and was capable of turning, but did not turn. There is no argument in this against the goodness of GOD.

6. What is blasphemy against the HOLY GHOST ?

If you are anxious lest you have sinned against the HOLY GHOST, you may be quite certain you have not, because the sin against the HOLY GHOST is saying, “ Evil, be thou my

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good," and if you had said that, you would not care anything about it at all. Those people who are making themselves miserable on this subject may be perfectly certain that they have not sinned against the HOLY GHOST, and there is a chance for them, if they repent and turn to GOD.

7. Bad thoughts flow into my mind at prayers. What can I do ?

You may be sure of this, that when Satan sees you trying to turn to GOD, he will stop you if he can. His whole object is to try and spoil GOD's work. He has only limited power ; he is only a finite creature, not a GOD at all, but he has the power for a time of trying to spoil GOD'S work. When he sees you kneeling down he tries to put bad thoughts into your mind. Turn upon him and say, "Get thee behind me, Satan" ; and, if you turn to GOD, He will come and meet you more than half-way. If you resist Satan, he will flee from you. Do not think you are wicked because you have those thoughts. Put up the shield of faith, and catch upon it the fiery darts of the Evil One.

IV

PARISH CHURCH, ACTON

SUNDAY EVENING

THE LOVE OF GOD

“Herein is love, not that we loved GOD, but that He loved us.” ~~St.~~ JOHN iv. 10.

THE first message of the Mission was “The Goodness of GOD”; the second message of the Mission is “The Love of GOD”—that GOD is love in Himself; that GOD, being love in Himself, loves me and you, and you, and you; that GOD, being love in Himself, loves every man, woman, and child among you. That is what we have got to persuade ourselves, that is what the HOLY SPIRIT desires to bring home to us, and that is what we have to make everyone believe.

First, GOD is love in Himself. What an awful thing it would be if He was not! I sometimes shut my eyes and ask myself what it would be if GOD was not love in Himself. If this really was an out-of-hand world, if there was no love and power behind it all, what a cursed place it would be! What would be the good of missions, and what would be the good of trying to work in the Diocese, what would be the good of trying to be a good citizen, if there is no hereafter, no love, no power behind anything?

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The whole of this life of ours would be a pitiable mockery if we were merely the sport of circumstances, and if our little planet was dancing a kind of devil's dance through space, anywhere; and it would be almost as bad for me and for you if we were left out. Supposing GOD was a loving GOD, but you had dropped out and been forgotten, what a sad life you would have! Even JESUS CHRIST could not stand that. "My GOD, My GOD"—it was the only thing that brought anguish from His lips—"why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And therefore you need not be ashamed of feeling that you could not stand it. There is a kind of almost quixotic Christianity which tells you you ought not to mind being blotted out of the love of GOD, and it is quite true that Moses said: "Blot me out rather than my people." I believe we ought to try and say that if the need came. But that does not alter the fact that even JESUS CHRIST could not bear the hiding of His FATHER's face; and not one of you is called to be content to be out of the love of GOD. You ought not to want it, and you ought to hate to picture that it could be so. Thank GOD, not one of you need! I love to think that you have got all GOD'S love bent down on you now. Whether you have not prayed for months makes no difference in this sense; GOD still loves you. There is not a child here who is out of the love of GOD. GOD is not only love in Himself, but GOD loves me, GOD loves you, and we all have the whole of GOD, as if there were not another living person in the world. That is the delightful part of it. To believe this is the second secret of joy in GOD, whatever happens, and

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if I did not believe this, how could I possibly preach a mission about it? If I am to have joy in GOD whatever happens, I must believe that the most unknown, the poorest, the most miserable person, the most miserable child, has the love of GOD, or else I feel that GOD would be unjust.

(1) And, first, what right have I to stand up in this pulpit, and say that, in spite of all that can be said on the other side, GOD is love in Himself? Because as I look up I see wave after wave of love and favour coming down from GOD towards His children. I see it first in the wave of life that comes. Why are you alive? Why are you and I alive in this church at all to-night? Simply because GOD is love, simply because GOD, Who is perfect in Himself, intended to spread happiness. He said, "Let there be life," and you and I are living here because GOD said that. You might say, "I do not want to be alive." But you do. It is just one of those things in which we quibble with ourselves. We set up some sort of argument in which we do not really believe. There is not a man or woman here who has been given the choice of having been alive or not having been alive who would not chose to have been alive. And when you look over this complicated human life you find that the happiness in it outweighs the unhappiness nine to one, at least. It is the fashion to get up a case against GOD, which is accumulated from all the individual cases of misery and misfortune which you see. But I will ask you to look over your friends and acquaintances, and all you know, rich and poor, and I am perfectly certain of this—and I have watched at close quarters the life of the

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poorest district of London, Bethnal Green—the proportion of happiness is nine to one in any given district of London ; I believe it is ninety-nine to one, but I put nine to one for certain. When we blaspheme GOD, and say GOD is a cruel GOD, and ask how He can be Love, our very life is an evidence of GOD'S love before our very eyes. Multitudes of people at any given moment are happy at the rate of nine to one compared to those who are miserable. That is a sign that GOD meant well to the human race, and means well now. But, you say, “ what about the one-tenth ? What about the poor little girl or boy who has to lead a suffering life ? ” In answer I ask, Why did JESUS CHRIST come down and suffer on the Cross ? To show that the love of GOD was with the suffering, to show that He was not going to leave even the one-tenth to suffer by themselves. And so He came as a human being—“ See the blood blind My eyes, the scourge fall on Me.” He acted like a General in a hard campaign, who might say : “ I cannot explain the reasons for this hard campaign, but I can lie on the hard ground with you, and can share your rations with you.” So GOD comes into the suffering world and says : “ I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. I cannot explain to you the sorrow and the disaster, but I can bear the worst with you. None of you will be called upon to be crucified in the hot sun ; none of you will be scourged before being crucified ; therefore I have borne the worst with you. If you have to lie on your back for years, if you have cancer or pain before you die, I have borne worse than that to start with. Therefore, believe in My love. We are all

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comrades in a hard campaign, and I, your General, have more wounds than any of you." If after that you and I have not the courage to follow, surely there is no grit or pluck left in the human race.

Then, again (I am showing you wave after wave of love), He was not content with that. GOD said: "How are those people of mine who will live in this new district of London, how are they to know about all this? How are they to be touched in their souls, and have a spiritual home?" And He planned out another wave of love, and this wave of love we call the Church. We call it the Church for the sake of a name. What it means is a Divine society, properly organised, with creeds, Sacraments, and a living ministry, which should go right down the ages, and which as we were born we should find waiting for us, and which should be—that was the idea—so full of the love of GOD that everybody that saw it and touched it would believe in GOD'S love, because of the beautiful love and harmony and unity of the Divine society which He called the Church. That was why JESUS CHRIST uttered an exclamation of joy when He said: "Now on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." How often we have spoken in church after church of the FATHER'S six gifts which He gave to the Prodigal Son—the kiss, the robe, the ring, the home, the feast, and the shoes for his feet—the outward and visible signs of love, which we call the Sacraments. The robe in Baptism; the ring in Confirmation, the oldest name for it—"Grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption"; the home which we

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were to have, a spiritual home in the Church ; the feast in the home, the Holy Communion ; and shoes for service. All waves of love. And therefore I stand up here, and I hold that I have proved my first point. I say that as I look up towards GOD, knowing there must be a GOD, I see wave after wave of beautiful love coming towards me, and I say : " GOD is love." " Herein is love, not that we loved GOD, but that He loved us." He began it. Picture some little child lying in his mother's arms. The little child from the earliest days almost unconsciously has always seen a kind face bent down and a pair of kind eyes, and the touch of someone whom he associates with the voice and eyes always from the earliest recollections of his existence. At last he wakes up and becomes conscious, and he looks up and he realises that it is his mother. Could he use more truthful words, when he was able to express it, than to say this : " Herein is love, not that I loved her, but that she loved me. She was there long before me, and loved me, and now I love her because she loved me first, from the very beginning " ? That is exactly what I want you to feel, that GOD begins this. It is not that we have to get hold of the love of GOD : GOD has hold of us, and until we throw ourselves out of His hand, it is GOD'S almighty love that holds us. What I want to do is to wake up some of those who are not children in age, but in faith, and who, through apathy, or ignorance, or forgetfulness, or love of the world, are not returning GOD'S love at all ; who, while GOD has been loving them all this time, have not loved Him back at all. All this must now be changed.

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(2) And that brings me to the second point which I have to prove—that GOD loves *you*. Have none of those waves of love come your way? Let me argue with you as if you were the only person who heard me. Are you so very miserable in yourself? or, if there is misery, is it not due to sin and selfishness? Have you a very unhappy home? Have you no one to love you? You are rather fond, I dare say, of talking over your grievances or difficulties. Let us talk over some of your blessings. A good house, wife and children to love, good health, friends—GOD gave you all those. Perhaps you have been attending this or another church for some time. Have you had any strength given you in the hour of temptation? When you prayed in that illness, were you given back your health, or not? Have you had any comfort in prayer? Have you received strength or grace in Confirmation or Holy Communion? All these things you might have received; it is not GOD'S fault if you have not. Be honest—be honest with yourselves. Have you no sign of GOD'S favour and love towards you? I do not believe any man or woman would dare to say, "I have not." For you know you have, and, if you know you have, you know that GOD loves you. Therefore I have a right to ask you, What have you ever done to show your love back to GOD? Have you done anything?

" This have I done for thee ;
What hast thou done for Me ?"

(3) And then, thirdly, " Ah !" you say, " Bishop, now you are coming to the most difficult thing ;

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you have got to prove that GOD loves all." Yes, but what was the plan, what were to be the means, by which everyone was to be made to believe in the love of GOD? Who were to be the agents? Why, it was to be through us; it was to be through you. The idea never was that man was to be passive, to do nothing, to be as selfish as he liked, and that GOD was going to convince the world by Himself that it was loved. Not at all. The idea was this: that there was to be a certain number of people gathered in one by one who were to believe these things, and it was through them the others were to be made to believe in the love of GOD. It was by a human ministry; it was by brother speaking to sister and sister to brother; it was by neighbour speaking to neighbour, in other words, by means of a Christian Church, that the world was to be made to believe in the love of GOD. As George Macdonald says in his beautiful lines,

"From Thine as then the healing virtue goes
Into our hearts—that is the FATHER's plan;
From heart to heart it sinks, it steals, it flows,
From these that know Thee still infecting those.
Here is my heart: from Thine, LORD, fill it up,
That I may offer it as the Holy Cup
Of Thy Communion to my every man."

What beautiful lines! The sender of them, a man who was with me in great worry, said when he sent them: "I send you this in memory of our glorious hour together; you cast out my devils, and I am a different man to-day." Now, the point was this: I did nothing but listen to what he said; there

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was Someone else with us all the time Who cast the devils out.

Now, the question is, What are we going to do about all this ? Here is the truth about GOD—GOD is love, GOD loves you, GOD loves all. There are two things we have got to do. I will just put them in outline now, and take them in detail later. We have got to love man more and love GOD more. There is not the slightest doubt that the best road to love GOD more is to do something for the children whom He loves. I have found that over and over again. When a man has been in doubt about GOD'S love, I have set him to do something for someone else. That has brought his love out quicker than anything else. There are five beautiful touches by which we are to touch our fellow-men, all finely put before us by an American writer in a book on "Service"—the Life touch, the Voice touch, the Service touch, the Money touch, and the Prayer touch—all ways in which we may touch others, and bring them by our touch to the feet of GOD. We have got to love man more, but we have got to love GOD more. Do you say you cannot love GOD ? But have you seen anything more winning than JESUS CHRIST ? GOD'S love was revealed in JESUS CHRIST, that we might understand it, that we might see it all in the terms of man. The world has gone after JESUS CHRIST. All the critics of the Bible are powerless against the influence of JESUS CHRIST. There He stands in Europe to-day, in spite of all the scoffs of the sceptics of the world. He is ten thousand times stronger than any living person in Europe ; it is merely a historic fact that He is ten thousand times

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more influential to-day than the German Emperor, or any other Emperor or King. And therefore He can afford to disregard the petty scoffs of those who deride Him. What is it that He reveals ? The love of GOD. And surely, when you see that perfect life perfectly lived, you must love it ! “ We needs must love the highest when we see it.” The truth of the matter is that you do not give yourself time to see it ; you fill up all your time with your business, with your household worries, with politics and with petty events recorded in the daily papers, and you have no time to look at perfect love. Get up early in the morning, get out the New Testament, and go down on your knees, and see what perfect love is, and see if you cannot love it a little bit. When you have thought over all that GOD has done to show you the love of GOD revealed in JESUS CHRIST, ask yourself : “ Is there anything stopping me from loving GOD ? Do I love anything that GOD hates ?” Face your life, see what is wrong in it, have the courage to confess it as sin and get rid of it. Then ask yourself : “ How much time do I give to praying ? Have I ever prayed for more love to GOD ?” And get time for asking this definite thing : “ O GOD, give me more love to Thee, and make Thyself more real to me ; make Thyself a real personal friend to me, that I may love Thee more.” Remember, the love wanted is not merely feeling ; it is an affair of the will : it is more than feeling. “ If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” Is there anything more in my life that I could do to please GOD ? That is better than feeling. Could I go and help some sick person ? Could I be more useful

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in the district ? Could I do more for the Church ? Could I be more unselfish at home ? I will do it. And be certain of this : that if we mean to love GOD more, and try the right way, GOD will give us more love to Him ; and my prayer as we kneel down is this : that every child of GOD may say the lines of the last hymn :

“ O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine, to be.”

ST. MARY'S, ACTON

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If these words are meant to be taken literally, surely this can be used as evidence against the divinity of our LORD.

The answer is that we must take the Catholic faith in its entirety, and you must remember that the Catholic faith is that GOD the SON came down from Heaven to earth, and there are three Persons in one GOD. And therefore there is no difficulty so far as that is concerned in believing that GOD the SON, in order to taste what really is the penalty for sin (separation from GOD—that is what the real penalty of sin is)—as far as it was possible for Him to taste it—went through the awful agony of feeling separated from His FATHER. Up to then He had not minded what He had to suffer, because always there was before Him the FATHER'S face; but, in order that He might taste the worst bitterness of death, the penalty of sin, so far as a sinless Person could do it, He suffered His worst possible trial on the Cross. "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Even then you notice He said, "*My GOD, My GOD!*" He had not lost His faith, but He did feel the bitterness and darkness of separation from GOD. When once you realise to yourself that GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST are three Persons in one GOD, there is no argument against the Catholic faith in that cry. But then comes the question, Why did He bear this awful darkness? I believe He did it in order to help numbers of people who have written to me to say they are in spiritual despair. I have

never had so many letters from people all over England to say, "All is dark to me; I have no faith; I feel GOD has forsaken me!" The answer is that CHRIST bore this for you. As Mrs. Browning so beautifully says:

"It went up from the Holy's lips,
Amid His lost creation,
That of the lost no son should use
Those words of desolation."

If any of you are saying that GOD has forsaken you, that it is all darkness, that you feel nothing, remember He suffered that you might know you were not forsaken.

2. Is prayer answered by signs, as in ancient times? Is it right to ask in prayer for a sign by which one may know what to do?

I think this rather a dangerous thing to do, because it seems to me that you might very easily lose your faith by picking out some sign which it was not GOD's will to give you. I think it is far better to ask in faith, and leave it to GOD to answer in His own way. I have known people quite upset in their faith by fixing on some sign, saying: "If I see that sign, I shall know that GOD has answered my prayer." It is really almost presumptuous to fix on signs. GOD may answer a prayer in a totally unexpected way. As we look back in life we see He has often answered quite differently to our expectations. I should not put much faith in signs if I were you; I should not look for them at all.

3. Why is it many people in this world suffer so much pain over a great number of years? Will they through so much suffering be quite free from pain in the next world? JESUS CHRIST only suffered three hours on the Cross.

I do not think we can find fault, if I may say so, with the amount of agony that our Saviour suffered, because His whole life on earth was a long persecution and trial, and He

voluntarily came and suffered death. I think if you went up to sufferers who are dying of cancer, you would find that nothing in the world helps them more than pointing to what GOD Himself suffered. Many a poor woman in the slums has said: "I must not complain; He suffered more than I have to suffer." The mere length of time is not a measure of the agony which is suffered. We believe there will be no pain, nor sorrow, nor crying in the other world—thank GOD for that!

"Far out of sight, while sorrows still enfold us,
Lies the fair country where our hearts abide,
And of its joys is naught more wondrous told us
Than these few words, 'We shall be satisfied.'"

Or, in words that have been a great comfort to me:

"It is not well that life should know too soon
The lovely secrets kept for them that die."

4. How is it possible in private prayer and in GOD'S house to keep the mind from wandering, and to realise that GOD is with us?

The answer to that is that we must hush ourselves. The great cause of wandering thoughts in prayer is, that we rush on to our knees without hushing the machinery of our minds, and therefore our minds work on what they were working on before. If you have only five minutes for prayer, it is worth a minute of it to hush yourself and stop the machinery. Think over what we have said of GOD. It is better to have four minutes of attentive prayer than five of inattentive prayer.

5. How can we best resist awful, evil thoughts and imaginations, even against GOD, and at times of prayer?

We must always remember that, although Satan has only a limited power, he can and does use it against those who are drawing near to GOD. He uses it often at the time of

Holy Communion, or at the time of solemn prayer, to put awful thoughts into the mind. What we must do is to catch them upon the shield of faith—the shield of faith which must be put up against the fiery darts of the Evil One. When they come, say, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” Draw near to GOD, and He will draw near to you. Temptation is not sin, but when it comes very near it leaves a sense of sin. We are all tempted, but we need not sin—that is the point. Do not be discouraged. If wandering thoughts will come, strive against them, and gradually you will get more hold upon your mind and heart.

6. It is mentioned in the New Testament, “GOD tempteth no man”; in the Old Testament it says, “GOD tempted Abraham.” Can you explain this discrepancy?

It is a question of words. In the Old Testament everything is ascribed to the direct action of GOD. GOD allowed Pharaoh to harden his heart, and GOD suffered this trial—temptation means trial—to come to Abraham, just as, it might be said to-day, GOD does such and such a thing, because He allows the will of man to have free play. When we do wrong, we might say GOD tempts us, but really in our temptation GOD is all on our side, and will enable us to conquer that temptation. It is in this sense GOD tempted Abraham, and GOD hardened Pharaoh’s heart; He allows the trial that comes to us; He allows us free-will, by which, if we will, we may harden our own hearts.

7. Why do some people who live gentle, kind, and honourable lives die without actually seeming to realise their salvation?

Many souls who cannot see CHRIST in this world at all clearly, may see Him in the next. They will there see their ideal. These unconsciously noble souls up to the very last seem often to be in a sort of cloud of doubt. The old promise

seems to apply to such a case: "If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of GOD." I feel certain that we can have this hope that those who are unconsciously following CHRIST, really breathing Christianity, inhaling Christianity, and living in the midst of it, but who have never had a clear sight of JESUS, in the other world will see the ideal Whom they have been unconsciously following. In the "Dream of Gerontius" the poet says:

"The eager spirit has darted from my grasp,
And with the intemperate energy of love
Flies to the dear feet of Immanuel."

He saw the ideal which he had been following all the time. I believe something of the same kind may happen to those who are really living up to what light they have got with all their power. They will see their ideal there, perhaps never clearly seen in this world at all.

8. Is it right for one to break away from the teaching of one's parents and join another Church?

It must be an overwhelming conviction to make one desire to leave the Church of one's fathers. We must, of course, follow Truth wherever it leads us; but the experience over and over again is this: that those who are thinking of leaving our Church to join another branch are actuated by motives and reasons which would not stand a really searching examination. Pause or consult someone whom you trust before you take that step.

9. How can we have a feeling of love for someone whom we know to be wicked and whose vices fill us with loathing?

We cannot love a man like that as he is. We have got to love him for what he was meant to be and is capable of becoming. GOD does not love the sin of anybody, but what I feel you ought to be doing about that person is praying

for him. He cannot be destitute of all good ; at any rate, go on praying for him. That is the way your love will be shown, and, one never knows, he may be converted and live. Of course, you cannot love his sin.

10. Is it better to stay away from Communion, as some teach, if you cannot go fasting, when health or distance from church makes fasting a physical impossibility ?

Certainly not. Beautiful and pious as the practice of fasting communion is, coming from early times, it was never meant to be pressed in the way it sometimes is, even when a man or woman is ill and could not possibly fast. I often have letters written to me on the subject, and I always say it must not be pressed to that point. I remember a case of a poor woman who was dying, and had not been to Communion for about two years, as she had been told not to go, it being impossible for her to go fasting. This was very cruel. I at once allowed her to come, and she received the Communion, and died six weeks afterwards. She would otherwise have died without receiving the Communion at all.

11. Why is it so difficult, both in public and private prayer, and also in Holy Communion, to realise the actual presence of GOD ? I cannot get help by prayer if I have not faith in praying for it.

Logically there is no escape from this difficulty, but there is an old proverb, *Solvitur ambulando* (" You solve the problem by walking"). So here you solve it by praying. With what little faith you have got, kneel down and pray, and you will find that your faith will increase by the using of it. If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, if you use it and water it, it will grow and grow, and you may become a person of very great faith before you die, and other people may come and rest under the shadow of your faith, as under the tree grown from the mustard-seed.

12. I do not understand what David meant in saying :
"I am like a pelican in the wilderness." Does it apply
to the Christian ?

The use of the Psalms in Christian worship constitutes this difficulty. Of course, they are a difficulty to some people, especially the cursing Psalms, or those which represent a frame of mind which may not be our own frame of mind at the time. Sometimes we have Psalms which do not apply to us particularly at the moment we are saying them. Read the "Psalms in Human Life," by Mr. Protheroe. There you will see how the Psalms reflect every phase of feeling, and every kind of life. Many a poor lonely soul would feel that this particular phrase, "I am like a pelican in the wilderness ; I have watched, and am even as it were a sparrow that sitteth alone on the housetop," exactly expresses their state, but as they go on in the service, they may take comfort from the Gospel message which tells them they are not really alone. The Psalms are sometimes joyful and sometimes sad. The beautiful thing is that they express different phases of the soul at different moments. There may be sorrowful or happy souls in the church ; all find something that suits them. It is not meant that this Psalm should represent the permanent frame of mind of the Christian who, if he thoroughly believes, should have joy in GOD ; but it expresses a passing frame of mind, although he may be comforted the next moment.

V

ST. MARY'S, ACTON

WEDNESDAY EVENING

HOW CAN I LOVE GOD BETTER ?

THE question for all of us, before the Mission passes on, is whether GOD is going to be able to claim His own. That is the point. I picture—and I believe it is a perfectly true picture—GOD looking down on all of us, love in Himself, loving each individually, and loving all, and waiting to see what is going to be the response to the Mission message of love which He has sent to this place. Remember, the awful thing is this—that we have the power of rejecting GOD'S love, we have the power of just letting the whole thing pass, saying, "It was a nice service," or not caring for the service one way or the other, showing that the thing had made no impression on us at all, or, on the other hand, of giving ourselves away to GOD, loving GOD in return, and having our whole lives changed by believing in the deathless love to which we give ourselves away for ever. That is the choice before us. And therefore the question is, "How can I love GOD better ?"

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And I expect all of us would echo the words of the hymn,

“ LORD, it is my chief complaint
That my love is weak and faint ;
Yet I love Thee and adore—
O for grace to love Thee more !”

(1) The first answer which I give to that question will perhaps surprise you : *Love man better*. People very often write to me imagining that they are loving their child or their husband or their wife or their mother too much. Over and over again people have said to me : “ Oh, I am afraid that child was taken away from me because I loved it too much ;” “ I believe I am loving my boy too much.” You *cannot* love them too much. You can love them wrongly, selfishly, and show your love in a foolish way by spoiling them ; you can love them in a distorted way, but you cannot love them too much. Your love for them is part of your love for GOD, and their love for you is part of GOD’S love for you ; and I really think nothing in the world does more harm to religion than imagining GOD to be that sort of jealous GOD. Of course, the Bible says that GOD is a jealous GOD, but He is not jealous of the love of those whom He has given us to love. He is jealous if we do not give love to all that is good, but He is not jealous of your love for your boy, your wife, or your husband. He gave them to you to love. Undoubtedly, the first way to love GOD better is to love man better ; or, as Plato said so long ago (it is extraordinary what a prophetic instinct he had for Christian truth), “ We must mount up from the love of one to the love of two, and from two to all fair

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forms, from the love of all fair forms to the love of the eternal loveliness." Or, as St. John puts it, under the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST: "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love GOD Whom he hath not seen?" And here come in those five touches of which I have spoken already—the five touches by which we express our love for our fellow-man.

(a) First of all, there is the *Life Touch*. Your life is mixed up at least with one other life, and probably with many more than one; but, much more than you have any idea of, your love for GOD depends upon what your life touch has been on every human life connected with you. For instance, supposing that life which is growing alongside of yours is receiving week by week and month by month injury from yours—depressed hope, damped courage, high ideals lowered—do you think you can love GOD? How can you love GOD? You have got to love that life first, you have got to get your own life right, to find out that you are in a wrong relation to that life, that your life touch is for the bad, and not for the good. While this is wrong it will stop you from ever loving GOD; the atmosphere is not clear, and you have got to show genuine real love for the brother whom you have seen before you can expect to love GOD Whom you have not seen. Is there anyone in your life suffering like that? Is there anyone who really some day will curse the day he ever met you, unless you alter? Think it over. The first thing you will be asked is, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" You have got to account for him. "Where is that sister?" Repent now; if you

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are ever to love GOD, your relation to that life which is next to yours must be righted. On the other hand, if that life which is so very near to yours is brightened by you, and helped by you, and strengthened by you, it may be that nothing will help you to love GOD more. That is why people go out, for instance, to work (perhaps only one night in the week) among the poor, or in clubs, or in the Church Lads' Brigade. By their work they get a faith in GOD they never had before, because of the distinct connecting link between self-sacrifice and love for those whom GOD loves, and our love to GOD. Nothing gives such a close connection with the Good Shepherd and sense of His presence as working with the Good Shepherd. That is the life touch.

(b) Then there is the *Voice Touch*. Have you ever thought what an extraordinary part the human voice takes in human life ? Why is there a pleading ministry for the salvation of the world ? Why should we ever have sermons ? Why not just read a printed book ? Why is there the ministry of men and women going round and knocking at the doors of our houses ? Why should we be so much influenced ? Why should Andrew go to find Simon ? Because the voice has an influence which nothing else has. Surely it is rather an awful thought that every word we utter sounds as though coming from a great sounding board in the courts of Heaven. We think that no one hears what we say. We forget the millions who are the witnesses of all that goes on. That word, which perhaps you said in the presence of some boy, was heard right up in the courts of Heaven, producing a shudder, as it were, at the sight of the harm the

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suggestion might make in his soul. That word of brave witness which took so much courage to say was repeated from lip to lip right up to the courts of Heaven, and was written down with a pen of gold. Such a thought makes every day of life of tremendously vital importance. That is why we shall have to give account of every idle thought at the Day of Judgment. Words are powers. We have, then, to ask ourselves, What about the voice touch? What is my voice doing among all my fellow human beings who are listening to my voice? Is it on the side of what is inspiring? Is it filling people with hope and love? Or is my voice heard in the courts of Heaven, ill-tempered, sneering, lying tales about other people, behind their back? Which way is my voice telling? Is it raised bravely on the side of what is right, or is it silent when it ought to speak? It is a question we may well ask on our knees. If anyone hears my voice constantly raised in ill-temper in my home, if I have told many a story against others, no wonder I do not love GOD. No one can love GOD who is perpetually nagging at home, perpetually depressing people, whose voice touch is not right on earth with the other members of the family. That must be got right.

(c) Next comes the *Service Touch*. "I am among you as He that serveth." It is one of the most gracious words ever uttered. Is that, I want you to ask yourself, the motto of your life, or are you always looking out to see if you get credit for what you do? Are you offended because you do not get your rights, perhaps quarrelling at this moment with someone because they do not pay you proper respect, or have said something about you which you think dis-

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paraging ? I believe there is nothing more wanted among our Church people than the touch of service ; not asking for public notice, but the simple belief that " I am among you as He that serveth," just as our Master took the towel and basin and went round and simply served, and washed even Judas's feet. Is there anyone, poor or rich, or in sorrow or sickness, whom you might serve ? Even with those whom we call servants there is all the difference in the spirit in which they serve. A salaried servant, a paid servant, can be the most beautiful of servers if he has the true spirit of love in his work. What a blessing it would be if we had servants who did their work as a labour of love ! What a beautiful thing service may be ! A doctor in his profession—what a spirit of unselfish service he can throw into his work, and make it a service like CHRIST'S ! The question is : Am I failing in service to my fellow-man ? If so, I am not likely to love GOD.

(d) Next there is what Mr. Gordon* calls the *Money Touch*. How dull it seems for a rich man simply to write cheques ! How dull it is to hear perpetual begging in the Church ! Let us look at the other side. Picture the other world. There is a man who has perhaps led a professional life, and could not go to preach the Gospel himself, but administered his wealth, little or much, in the spirit of a steward. Picture him, after a long life, going to the other world. He does not recognise a particular person there who comes up to him and says : " You were my best friend. It was you who prepared me for Orders. I should not have been a priest but for

* In his book " Quiet Talks on Service."

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you." He remembers that he did regularly subscribe to a fund for educating young men for Holy Orders. "It was you," another says, "who sent the missionaries to Africa, where I was converted." Another says: "I was at my worst; I was in despair down there on earth, but your kind help gave me hope." The money touch, if it is carried out rightly in the spirit of a steward, is a beautiful way in which we touch others, so long as it is administered with common sense as well as generosity.

(e) Lastly comes the *Prayer Touch*. We have spoken of that, but I want you to feel that when you put aside five or ten minutes every day to intercede for the Mission Field, or for those who are in need of help, that you are stretching out holy, living hands, and are touching the sufferers with a healing touch. And you cannot forget to pray if you believe that.

These five touches, then, must be exercised in the love of man, and they will be the first step to loving GOD. You say: "Yes, Bishop, I will try and do that; I have tried my best to do that; still, I do not love GOD as I should like. What am I to do next? How can I love GOD better? I feel that something more is wanted."

(2) The next thing that is wanted still is a real conviction that GOD is a real Person. I found myself twenty-five years ago great help in Professor Flint's book on "Theism." The great point of the book is that he produces a conviction which never leaves you through life, that GOD must be a Person. There are three chief proofs of this in the book. One that the universe shows the *sign of mind*. We all feel perfectly certain that Shake-

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speare's plays were written by a person, because there is the mark of mind in them. But, as you look at the universe, is there no mark of mind in that play more wonderful than any of Shakespeare's? There are the fifty million blazing suns all kept in order; the atmosphere is wrapt round the earth; the earth is near enough to the sun to be warmed by it, but not near enough to be scorched. Here is a mark of mind, unless we are perfectly blind. And then, secondly, we have a *conscience*. If there is one thing clear, it is this, that down in the breast of everybody there is something that tells them the difference between right and wrong. Who put it there? Would anyone who was not a righteous person put what Dr. Chalmers calls "a reclaiming witness against Himself"? Every one of us knows the difference between right and wrong, and that knowledge we call conscience, and it is a sign that the Person who put it there is a righteous Person. There never has been any answer to that. Is He more than righteous, more than wise? And here, thirdly, comes in our Christianity. If I did not believe in the *Incarnation*, I should not be certain that GOD was loving, because there are things in nature which you can only bear to look at in the light of the *Incarnation*. If you were to try to form your faith out of the things that happen in life, you would not find absolute proof that GOD was love. But we do believe for these three reasons that GOD is a wise Person, a righteous Person, and a loving Person.

Then in five original photographs in the New Testament—for the Epistles of St. Paul form the earliest, and quite an original and absolutely in-

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dependent photograph—I have portrayed before me for my meditation and adoration the character of the person I am asked to love. Do you think it is very difficult to love JESUS CHRIST? I do not think that it is. I do not think that it is if you give yourself the time to study His character. Read a book, for instance, to help you—"Studies in the Character of CHRIST," by Canon Robinson. It is like having an intelligent man by our side in a beautiful portrait-gallery who helps us to understand what we see.

The second way, then, of learning to love GOD is to realise that He is a person. Get up in the morning in time to meditate on the perfect character revealed to us in the New Testament—"the glory, grace, and truth as seen in the face of JESUS CHRIST."

(3) Thirdly, do not forget the part which the HOLY SPIRIT was sent upon earth to play in producing a belief in the love of GOD. We are told that the love of GOD is to be shed abroad in our hearts through the HOLY GHOST that is given unto us. We are told that the HOLY GHOST takes of CHRIST and shows Him to us. We are told that the HOLY GHOST will cry, "Abba, FATHER" in our hearts. Now, it is quite possible that some of us do not pay sufficient attention to the HOLY SPIRIT's work. Instead of trying to stir up our own feelings, we ought to pray to the HOLY GHOST to shed abroad the love of GOD in our hearts, to take of CHRIST, and show Him to us, to cry "Abba, FATHER" in our hearts. There may be some of you who have not been confirmed. Why do you not come and be confirmed, and have the falling of the HOLY GHOST upon you in full strength? That is one clear, definite step to take if you want to love GOD

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better. Do give full play to the work of the HOLY SPIRIT.

(4) Fourthly, do not aim at the wrong kind of love. The love for GOD is not meant to be the same love with which a man loves a woman. It is a special kind of love. We are told to love GOD with all our mind, with all our strength, with all our being, and I would draw it out under five heads. The mind has to be satisfied with finding its centre. The pleasure of the mind is great when it finds the centre of the universe, and is satisfied with it. You love GOD with the conscience, when the conscience, finding its ideal, is satisfied. Love Him too with the strength. Work for Him, the One Who is always working for others. Get to love Him with the spirit, because the spirit, finding the FATHER of spirits, rejoices in His comforting care. Love Him with the heart because there is something in the child which responds to the loving heart of the FATHER. Love for GOD, then, is the kind of love which trustfully abandons itself to a great Loving power. It is not we who have got hold of GOD, but GOD has hold of us. That is the right kind of love.

(5) Then, lastly, never forget that this love is not a question of a passing feeling at the moment; it is much more a question of will than feeling. You notice it is said again and again: "They that will to do the will of GOD shall know of the doctrine." "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." And the question St. Paul asked was this: "What wilt Thou have me to do?" *Then* he was converted, not when he was stricken down with the blaze of light.

Therefore, what GOD wants is not your feelings;

He wants your will. If you will to do the will of GOD, if you will to love Him more, if you will to abandon what keeps you back from Him, if you will to come to church regularly, and come to Communion, if you will to dedicate your professional work to His service, and to leave the world better than you found it, then you are on the road to love GOD better; then your course is like the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Satan will try and persuade you that it is your feelings that matter, and that when you do not feel right GOD has deserted you, but remember that GOD'S love is always there behind the cloud whether you feel it or not. Advance on this path, and you will progress in the love of GOD—

“Till in the ocean of His love
You lose yourself in Heaven above.”

CHISWICK PARISH CHURCH

SUNDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Is the soul some definite thing that lives inside the person ?

This is a very common misunderstanding. We are immortal souls, immortal spirits. It is not that you are a person living in Chiswick who happens to have an immortal soul, but you are an immortal spirit who happens for a few passing years to live in Chiswick. You are a person who cannot die ; you are a spirit. I was once asked by a man if his soul would come out of his mouth when he died. This is one of the misunderstandings which have arisen from those foolish pictures of people dying and showing the soul apparently coming out of their mouth. We are people who cannot die, who will be living millions of years somewhere.

2. Is the account of our LORD'S temptation really true ? and how did the account come down to us ?

This is an intelligent question to ask. Just as some missionary or faithful parish priest tells his people all that he has been through, and to encourage them tells them of some great temptation he has had, and how he has had to fight his way with the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, so our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who never left for a single moment anything undone that could have helped the disciples, gathering them together, must have told them of His temptation, of what He had been through, how He had to fight the Evil One, how

He fought and conquered, to encourage them, and to encourage others. It was a real temptation ; we must not look upon it as an unreal drama. I have spoken about unreality in religion ; if it is the most real thing in the world, everything is real about it, and our LORD was really tempted. It was a real effort to get His human will conformed to the Divine will. He fought the battle with just the same help which we can have. He prayed, He quoted His Bible, took a word from the Bible to stay Him and to strengthen Him—He kept in communion with His FATHER—He used the same weapons which He gives to His soldiers to fight with. No doubt the account is thrown into a picture form. We need not believe that our LORD was actually taken to the pinnacle of the Temple—it was in imagination—but He was really tempted to convince the people of His divinity by some startling display, instead of by the slow method of the Passion and the Cross. People sometimes say, “If GOD put a sign in the sky, I would believe,” but the phenomenon would be explained in the next magazine. GOD will not give these signs to us ; they would produce belief in the wrong way. There is a moral element in belief ; and if we did have such signs, what was prophesied would happen—“Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” The account of the Temptation is, then, a real record of a real temptation.

3. What message can be given to a dear friend who has had his first child born dead ?

There is no comfort except in religion. I do not know how I could comfort anyone like that if I did not believe in another world to which that spirit has been taken at once, and in which the infant life will be cherished. I remember once I went into a working man’s room when all his three children had died at once, in half an hour ; he had no children left. You might suppose that that man and his wife would be atheists for the rest of their lives. They were not. They had learnt the Christian faith, and they thought of the Good

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Shepherd taking the lambs in His arms, and believed they would find them again there. They entered into the spirit of the hymn,

“FATHER, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we here Thy dear ones sleeping.”

That is what conquers the world. I attended a funeral the other day, when a beloved father was laid to rest ; the children worshipped that father. There was not a wet eye at the service, because all the children, much as they loved him, were transfigured with the thought that he had been taken by our LORD to Paradise. “This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.”

VI

CHISWICK PARISH CHURCH

SUNDAY EVENING

THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD

“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”—Ps. lxxxv. 10.

“JOY in GOD, whatever happens,” is the message and the object of the Mission. We have thought of the Goodness of GOD as a motive; we have thought of the Love of GOD—“Herein is love, not that we loved GOD, but that He loved us.” We come now to the Forgiveness of GOD—the most misunderstood, the most flouted, and the most inspiring characteristic—if we may dare to say so—of the GOD Whose character we are studying point by point with reverence and faith.

(1) I am going to try to justify each of those epithets. First, the *most misunderstood*. If I was to put into words what a great many people think about GOD, I believe it would be something like this: They picture GOD as a sort of good-natured, easy-going Father, such as we sometimes see in our London life—not very particular about what He does Himself, not too particular about what His children do. I believe that is the sort of idea many people have got. In consequence all this talk about repentance, all these sermons about

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sin, all these hymns about the Cross and about the Atonement, are only "a sound of little meaning, though the words are strong." What is it all about ? a man asks. "I suppose if I have done a little something wrong, GOD will forgive me." And therefore, if we are to appreciate in the least degree the forgiveness of GOD, we must speak a little about the Justice of GOD. If our King, for instance, took that sort of view about the country, and issued an edict that all prosecutions for crime should be forbidden throughout the British Empire, where should we be in six months' time ? Or if, when a prisoner got up in the dock, having, perhaps, most terribly ill-treated some poor woman, and said he was very sorry, it was all over, and he were sent away with no trial and no punishment, where should we be ? The whole moral standard of the country would go down in six months, and you would not recognise it as the same country. There are plenty of crimes committed now, but that is nothing to what it would be in six months' time under what we might call the good-natured idea. Do we suppose that GOD can afford to be less careful of the moral standard of His empire than our King is ! At any rate, we must give Him credit for meaning what He says, and He has pointed out over and over again the sort of people we are to be, and the sort of standard which He expects. This, of course, is quite the ABC of religion. Take the Ten Commandments : we all admit that they at any rate represent what He expects His children to do. Or take the Beatitudes—"Blessed are the pure in heart," "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are ye when ye are persecuted for righteous-

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ness' sake." They at any rate represent what GOD expects to see in His children. But for clearness' sake I will take the six laws of which I have already spoken*—laws which are perfectly clearly the laws of GOD which His children have to observe. First, the Law of Purity in thought and word and deed. The strongest language is used against any breach of it at all. I could quote passage after passage, but you know them for yourselves.

Secondly, the Law of Dependence—every day, every hour, every moment to depend upon the grace of GOD. We have seen† that we become men when we are converted, when we turn; we are not turned into some unnatural person, but into the men we were meant to be. So here, by the law of dependence, when a man kneels down and says "Our FATHER, which art in Heaven," he is never so much a man, because man is a praying animal, born to pray. It is a law of his condition—absolute dependence upon GOD for grace and strength every day.

Then there is the Law of Work. "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard"—no one could possibly have a better motto—the law of work, which is one of the laws which the FATHER has given us all (every one) to keep. It does not mean merely the earning of our daily bread, to satisfy the pangs of hunger. Cannot you join the Church of England Men's Society, or do something for the boys or the girls—do something to spread the kingdom? "Work, work, work, while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work."

* See Address to Men at All Saints, Acton, pp. 191-205.

† See Address to Men at Chiswick, pp. 206-220.

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Then comes, fourthly, the Law of Witness. When we look at the stars, what are they doing? Witnessing. That far-away star is telling the world that when the night is over it will see the sun, and that is what it is there for. This is one of the laws of the Kingdom. No man or woman was sent into the world to do nothing, to be merely respectable, or to avoid being taken up before the magistrate. I have heard it said on a death-bed, "I have never been before the magistrate," as if that were enough. If we are not witnessing, we are in the way. There is only a limited space on this planet, and the law of witness is that we have to light up a little portion of the world's darkness. If we are not doing that, we are in the way, because a better man or woman could be there. Think of the unfruitful tree. Over and over again the husbandman came round and found no fruit. It was not enough to have the tree there taking up useful space, absorbing the dew and moisture from the soil; it was in the way. The husbandman came round and looked for fruit, and, finding none, said: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" The law of witness, it is clearly revealed to us, GOD expects us to obey.

Then there is the Law of Correspondence. We are to have grace for grace; we are to correspond to all the leadings of the SPIRIT. It is not enough to feel the leading; we have got to obey it. Those who obey the leading are led on to something else. "As many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the sons of GOD." All these years GOD has been expecting to see the leadings obeyed. I am speaking to those who think they have no sin, and think they

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are quite ready to die. How many leadings of the SPIRIT have you obeyed through the last ten years ? The voice was sounding in our ear, the gentle SPIRIT was pleading in our conscience, and the law of correspondence is that we should obey the leading, and receive one grace and through it go on to another. That was the law under which we came into being, and which we are supposed to obey.

Sixthly, the Law of Day by Day, one of the laws of the Kingdom : one day at a time—no fuss, no hurry, no want of faith, no worrying about the future, no discontent because we are not so rich as other people.

I do not know anything about your lives, but before you say that my words about Forgiveness have nothing to do with you, I want you to ask yourself, "Have I kept all those laws of the Kingdom ?" If you say, "I have kept the law of purity in thought and word and deed perfectly ; I have always been entirely dependent upon GOD ; I have never missed my prayers, have never missed trusting Him ; I have never left undone any work I could possibly do ; I have witnessed to the best of my power ; my voice has been lifted up in the shop or in the drawing-room in giving my witness ; I have tried to correspond to the leadings of GOD'S grace ; I have tried to trust day by day"—if you very humbly say that, feeling that you have not done it as well as you might, all I can say is, Thank GOD ; you are one of those (if there is such a one who can give that answer) who have been converted from the cradle, turned all the time. Be sure you are not deceiving yourself. But what I want to press home now, before you decide that you do not want any forgiveness at all, is that you

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should take those laws of the Kingdom one by one and press them home. What about your thoughts ? What are your thoughts when you are by yourself ? Have you no bad thoughts coming into your mind, as so many have said they had, even in church and even at the Communion ? They are the darts of the Evil One, perhaps, but you may have indulged them. What about the law of purity in word and deed ? Oh, if there are any of you who have broken it, if there are any who know there are souls around them whom they have injured, or to whom they have set a bad example, you must go down on your knees and say, "GOD be merciful to me a sinner." Do not talk about not wanting forgiveness. The question is, Can you be forgiven ?

You cannot undo that, you cannot recall it ; you cannot alter the fact that the boy or girl was the worse for your example or for what you said. Can you be forgiven ? What about the law of dependence ? Have you never given up your prayers ? have you never forgotten them ? or have there been times in your life when you have said, "I will be independent of GOD ; I am going to give up this religion ; I am tired of it" ? You have turned away for sometimes months or even years. I remember one man who for forty years never said a prayer : he was at one of our Missions in the provinces. Another man from Lancaster Gate had never said a prayer for thirty years until he heard the announcement, "I am the Light of the world ; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." He was brought by the grace of GOD to pray again. We never know what may happen in a Mission. Have you got

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nothing to repent of? You have been breaking the law of dependence all the time, there is not the slightest doubt, if you have not been depending on GOD. Your temper may not have been what it ought to be. Your witness may not have been what it ought to be. You must ask for forgiveness—quite apart from what you are going to do in the future—for trying to be independent of GOD. What about the law of work? Whom have you ever brought into GOD'S family? Have you been a worker? The Christians are a small body compared with the rest of the world: what have you done for foreign missions, or for the hundreds and thousands in London who never go to church? "Son, go work in My vineyard." How much have you toiled in the vineyard? Or the law of witness. I believe we fail most in this. Of course, there is a limit to the time which men and women—especially working men and women—can have to go and work, but I think we could do more than we do. We are so afraid of being laughed at, and of standing up for our colours. We allow talk to go on which we ought to protest against; we allow people to be badly treated and go to the wall, and we do not go out and say that we will not allow it. Before we go and kneel at the foot of the Cross we have to be certain that we have sinned; we must understand the justice of GOD and His standard. Have you never broken the law of correspondence? Have you never turned your back upon a call to do something you knew you ought to have done? You heard the gentle pleading of the Holy Dove of GOD within you, but you did not obey; you slipped back and back, until the voice of the SPIRIT is almost silent—not dead—but silent in

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you. What about the law of day by day? Why should we have all this fretfulness, impatience, fuss, and worry if we really believe in the providence of GOD day by day? We should take one day at a time, trusting for our message, for our work, for our sustenance, and praying, "Give us this day our daily bread."

I have had to begin like that. I should fail in my duty if I did not try and show you the facts. You are perhaps rather self-satisfied. If you were judged now, you would be condemned, perhaps, on all six points. GOD must be just. If He was not just, where should we be? Dr. Dale of Birmingham, that fine old Nonconformist, brought home to me the necessity for the justice of GOD in one of his books. Supposing GOD was not just—supposing the rich man, who had led astray some poor innocent girl, and then, perhaps, flung her on the streets of some foreign town, dies, after having had the best nurses and the best doctors—dies unrepentant, and there is no punishment waiting on the other side? Dr. Dale said: "We might still ask, Where is the GOD of the fatherless, and who defendeth the cause of the widow? but we could no longer answer, It is GOD in His holy habitation." GOD has never any favourites. We must not say, "This is allowed because I am So-and-so, because I am so popular in the club, because I have got so many friends." We are not judged by that kind of standard at all; we are judged by the inexorable standard of GOD Himself, Who will judge the world by the standard of that Man Whom He has ordained, JESUS CHRIST.

Do we, then, want a SAVIOUR? I believe every honest

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conscience is asking now : " Can I be forgiven ? " That is a very different question—very different to saying : " I do not want any forgiveness. " And, of course, it is a joy to me to make you ask that question, and then to answer it. You can be forgiven, and that is why we have a Mission. You cannot be forgiven until you are convicted of sin, but when you are convicted of sin, and see yourself as you are, and as you would be if the Judgment Day was now, then it is a joy to point to the one place in the whole world where you can be forgiven—at the foot of the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. That is the meaning of the hymn :

" O trysting-place, where Heaven's love
And Heaven's justice meet ! "

And that is the meaning of the text from the Psalms : " Mercy and truth are met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. " Two impossible things have been done : mercy and truth have met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Why ? Because the impossible thing happened, because the broken law of GOD, broken by everyone, was perfectly kept by JESUS CHRIST ; because He came down and perfectly obeyed the broken law of GOD. When we have emptied ourselves of all merit and no longer claim that we have saved ourselves, when we have confessed our sins at the foot of the Cross, and looked up as St. Paul did, and said, " He loved me, and gave Himself for me, " then comes the message of peace down. You can be forgiven. GOD is a forgiving GOD. He has Himself ordained this way of escape ; He has lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. " As Moses lifted

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up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the SON of MAN be lifted up." It is not by an unreal shibboleth, but by a real, perfect obedience of the broken law, that the standard of the world is kept up. The law has been kept that "With the clean thou shalt be clean." We plead His sacrifice; we leave our sins behind us, we ask to have them forgiven, we resolve to abandon the past, and we shall be forgiven for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

Now do you see why a Mission is such a beautiful thing? I have seen numbers of people who have sinned quite as much as any of you—I do not know what your sins are—who have told them out one by one, have seen they were absolutely wrong in their lives up to that time, have confessed their sins, and have come, perhaps in the extremity of their grief, and asked me to help them to confess their sins. We have knelt together at the Cross, and I have seen those very people absolutely transformed from being miserable and unhappy to those who show in their faces the joy which no one can take from them. Will you be like them? That is the question.

(2) And yet I am bound to justify my second epithet. This is also the *most flouted* characteristic of GOD. Oh, it is an awful thing, when you think over what it means, how the sacrifice of CHRIST is flouted to-day! You say: "But how can we flout it, such a solemn thing as that?" We flout it first of all by thinking forgiveness such an easy thing, by coming in a light-hearted way, thinking it is nothing to be forgiven. The message that comes down from the Cross is not only, "Behold the Lamb of GOD, Who taketh away the sin of the world," but,

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as you see those open wounds, "Behold the Lamb of GOD, and *what it cost Him* to take away the sin of the world." That is the point—what it cost Him. When you think as you get your pardon that He had to come down and be battered and buffeted, and had to lie in the sun with all those wounds and die, you cannot take lightly your forgiveness, can you? Take it, but realise what it cost. "Behold the Lamb of GOD," what it cost Him to take away the sin of the world; and it is in the light of what it cost Him that we understand what our pride and wickedness have been. It is possible, of course, to say: "Well, it may be all true, but any other night will do. I will put it off. I will think it over." Thou fool! Do you remember what the rich fool said, and how he was answered? "There is plenty of time. I will fill up my barns with corn. Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy fill." What was the answer? "This night thy soul is required of thee." You never know you will have another chance; you never know whether you will see these things exactly as you do at this moment. I pray you not to flout the crucified LORD like that. Remember the awful cost of it, and that you may never have another chance again.

And then, again, there are those who think that by confessing their sins again and again, and not making any real effort to get rid of them, they are fulfilling the law of forgiveness. Do you not remember that the promise is, "His name shall be called JESUS, for He shall save His people *from their sins*"? It is not enough to go on confessing the same sin over and over again." The question is, "Are you getting

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rid of your sin, getting it rooted out of your character, getting away this thing that brought JESUS to the Cross ?" All these are possible ways of flouting the forgiveness of GOD. But I would fain believe that there is no one of you who would do that, and I want you to take those six laws—you have got them in your memory—put them down, and get some quiet time, and ask, "Have I broken that ?" Write it down ; then picture the trysting-place, and one by one tell out the tale. And when you have confessed your sin, then believe you are forgiven.

Another common way of flouting the forgiveness of GOD is by souls not believing that they are forgiven when they are. I have found people who have confessed their sins, and who are most sorry for them, but do not believe they are forgiven, and are just as miserable afterwards. I was speaking to a parish priest lately, and he said he had a case like that—a poor girl who had repented of her sin, had done everything she could, had made confession of it, had asked direction about it, but could not believe that she was forgiven ; and he said : "I will not help you any more at all unless you promise to believe that when I pronounce the Absolution over you that sin is forgiven." And what he said to her I say to all of you. When you have gone through real repentance and Confession, then you will be forgiven, the sin will be wiped out of the book. "I saw the ocean of light and love," said John Wesley, "flow over the ocean of darkness and death, and in this I saw the infinite love of GOD." Is not that an inspiring thought ? I say this deliberately, that there is no joy like the joy of being

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forgiven. We are told "there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth," we are told there is joy in Heaven when the lost lamb comes back; but there is also the joy on earth of being forgiven, to know the burden is off your back, to know the past will never come up again against you, to have your feet upon the rock, to be on the mountain with your face towards the summit, to know that GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST rejoice over you, to know that if you keep firm the Evil One cannot touch you, to know that no one can pluck you out of your FATHER'S hand, but that you have the victory that overcometh the world. That is the joy of forgiveness which the world can neither give nor take away.

CHISWICK PARISH CHURCH

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Was our LORD really tempted as we are, with constant temptations in everyday ways?

We must believe the whole of the Catholic faith, which is that our LORD was really man as well as really GOD. Unless we realise that, the whole thing is unreal, the temptation is an unreal drama. When you come to the Cross on Good Friday, unless He was a real man really suffering, and the Victim of all that sneering, contemptuous multitude, with real sensitiveness, feeling all the scorn, we do not realise that it was a real temptation to Him—to keep His human will perfectly conformed to the Divine will. He did do it, but it required a constant and real effort. Therefore, when you are tempted in the office or by some old sin, it ought to be a comfort and a help to you to remember that your dear SAVIOUR was really tempted too. He was without sin because He did not fall, but He felt the full blast of the temptation all the more because He did not sin.

2. "Therefore I say unto you, whatsoever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." These words mean to me, so far as I can understand, if we ask GOD for something with our heart full of faith, then He will give it us. Why is not that so? A little while ago I besought GOD most earnestly to spare the life of a person nearest to me, but GOD did not answer my prayer.

Now, of course, we must put together all the things that JESUS CHRIST says about prayer. He often taught by what are called paradoxes. You will find that Bishop Gore's books on the Sermon on the Mount and on other New Testament books are generally very helpful, and one of the things which he points out is that our LORD taught by what are called paradoxes—that is to say, He states some truth very forcibly without all the qualifying things which have to be added to make it an absolutely full truth. Thus you find in other parts of His teaching, "Give to everyone that asketh of you." Well, we know perfectly well that taken quite literally that is not the right thing to do. You find that this has to be qualified by numbers of other things which occur in His teaching. So with regard to prayer you have to put all the things that He says about prayer together. "Whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you" is one thing; but then you go on and find this qualified by the condition that it must be according to the will of GOD. Supposing we were to ask something that was mischievous, would GOD be a kind GOD to give it us? Of course He would not. It is to be the best thing for us, according to His will. Another qualification is that we have to ask believing—that is the one mentioned here. Another, it is to be in JESUS CHRIST's name. "Whatsoever ye ask in My name, I will give it to you." Therefore an intelligent study of the Bible is necessary—and we ought to take more trouble over those things than we do—or any good book on prayer, like that of Chancellor Worlledge, would help us. I recommend books because I am quite certain that what many of you want are good books to give you a more intelligent interest and understanding in religion. We all have to read more; our lay people ought to read much more and attend Bible-classes and lectures, so as to have a more intelligent view of the Bible. You must put all the qualifications of prayer together if you want to understand what the promise is as to prayer.

3. Is a wilful lie permissible under extraordinary circumstances? I will give a case. I have received certain information from A., but quite inadvertently I make this fact known to a third person, one very much concerned, who immediately takes me to task with the question: "Has So-and-so told you this?" Is it right to say: "No; I have never seen that person"?

Clearly not. When once you begin lying about anything, where are you going to stop? You are carried on. The initial mistake was to mention something you ought not to have mentioned. When you tried to cover it over with a lie, it was only making it worse, or it would have been. Of course, it may be only a suggested case, but I cannot picture a case—except, of course, that of someone in a very bad illness, to whom the doctor may be afraid for the moment to tell the exact truth—where lying is justified.

4. How far is ambition compatible with the Christian life? Is it right for one to spend a considerable time—years—in preparing for a profession, instead of spending that time and energy in working for CHRIST in a particular Church?

I should say, so far as I can judge the case, that it is quite right for a young life to devote these opening years to training itself for its future profession. There must be some of you at school, and, of course, your duty is not to go out from school and spend your time in taking Bible-classes or teaching in Sunday-schools at present. When you become fully trained and have got your professional work and status in life, or are fathers and mothers, then you have to use all you are learning now as stewards. I do not think, therefore, in this case there is any wrong ambition in working as hard as you can to be a success in your professional work.

5. What is the meaning of Hebrews vi. 4, 5, 6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made

partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance"? Why should repentance be impossible?

That sentence has been a puzzle to generations of people, and, as I said just now, you have to qualify one passage by another. We are not allowed to interpret one passage of Scripture so as to make it repugnant to or to contradict another. No doubt that is a very strong statement of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews—"It is impossible to renew them again when they have fallen away." It calls attention to a terrible truth, and that is that in the case of those, for instance, who may be converted in a Mission like this, and who have gone through all the stages of repentance, conversion, and absolution, and then turned back to their old sin—the same sin again—it is ten times as difficult to bring them back. That is what the warning is. If you will look at the sixth chapter, you will see that that is the warning. But I am not prepared to say that that word "impossible" ought to be interpreted in the sense which empties all the other passages of the New Testament of all their promises. We are told in every other passage that no sin is too bad to be forgiven. I put all those passages side by side, and I am prepared to preach that there is not one, though he may have fallen away from fifty Missions, who may not be saved in this one.

6. What is the questioner, who has a large practice among the sick, to do with the numbers upon numbers—especially among the well-to-do—who are allowed to die without any spiritual ministration at all?

I believe it is absolutely true that certainly among the rich there is an increasing tendency to keep the clergyman out of the sick-room, yet I should like to say that the leading physicians in London are dead against this. I have spoken to some of them, and they say they have never

traced the slightest harm from spiritual ministrations of the earnest, tactful minister. I do think myself that we ought to make a protest on behalf of those who are sick, that they should not be debarred from the spiritual ministrations which would be a comfort to them in their sickness. I believe it is only a certain class of doctor that does it, and I think that the whole Church, including many of the very best and highest in the medical profession, who are most devoted Churchmen, are absolutely against this debarring of the clergyman from the sick-room.

7. **Why should GOD be said to have the courage of sacrifice when He sent His SON? If the King sent the Prince of Wales, it would be the Prince of Wales who would show the courage, and we should not be able to speak about the courage of the King.**

Surely you know how absolutely misleading such a metaphor as that is. There are three Persons in one GOD. The Blessed SON hated the sin as much as GOD the FATHER; GOD the FATHER loved the sinner just as much as GOD the SON, and the great sacrifice which is offered on Good Friday was the plan of the HOLY TRINITY; one plan of one GOD, GOD the FATHER taking His part, GOD the SON taking His part, and GOD the HOLY GHOST coming down and bringing it home to the hearts of men. It is a great demonstration of the sacrifice and the love of GOD Himself. Therefore the writer only half understands the glory and the mystery of the Christian faith, or else he would not ask such a question as that.

VII

CHISWICK PARISH CHURCH

WEDNESDAY EVENING

“HOW TO BE FORGIVEN”

MY object now is to see that no one who has been brought within the influence of the Mission shall leave it without being forgiven. That is the point. Why should anyone be left out? Beneath the Cross of JESUS there is room for us all. You remember the lines I have quoted about the trysting-place where Heaven's love and Heaven's justice meet. The first reason why there is no cause at all why everyone should not be forgiven is that at the foot of the Cross there is room for all.

Then, again, the offer is made to all. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, . . . come ye to the waters; come ye, buy, and eat.” I am certain that we do not realise that just as the whole of GOD'S attention is directed to every one who prays, and all of GOD is bent down, so JESUS CHRIST died on the Cross for me and for you, as if there were not another person to die for. He came to find all His sheep, and therefore every one is called. The LORD turned and looked upon Peter, individually looked at him, looked him in the face,

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and it was that look that pierced him through and produced true repentance. What I want you to realise is this, that in this hushed silence JESUS, as it were, looks at you ; the LORD turns and looks at you, as if there were not anyone else to look at, and marks you down and asks you—

“ This have I done for thee ;
What hast thou done for Me ? ”

Then, again, there is no respect of persons whatever beneath the Cross of JESUS. There is as much joy in Heaven when some lad in Chiswick unknown to the world repents of his sin ; there is as much joy in Heaven when he comes back, confesses his sin, and is forgiven, as when the noblest in the land does the same. There is no respect of persons, but there is the same joy in Heaven when anyone comes back. And contrariwise, there is no one in the land, however highly placed, however well known, who can have any joy except at the foot of the Cross of JESUS.

Therefore, when you think of that, and know that the actual path to joy is through forgiveness, and the most beautiful joy in the world is the joy of being forgiven, then you will understand that there is no reason why every man, woman, boy, and girl here should not begin to work up to the full forgiveness.

I ask you, then, to consider with me the question, “ How to be Forgiven.” I will give five answers—five ways in which I believe we ought to take our forgiveness.

(1) The first is with a very *generous repentance*.

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When we look up from beneath the Cross of JESUS, we think of the absolute generosity of GOD—the perfectly glorious generosity of GOD. Just think who GOD is, and think what He did. I say to you that the first point with regard to being forgiven is, make a generous repentance. I have known people who half repent, and they hide back from GOD this, and make excuses about that, and say, “Well, I went to such a bad school here, and had such bad companions there,” and so on. My friends, that is not the way to meet the generous abandonment which won you your forgiveness. It is not merely, “Behold the Lamb of GOD, Who taketh away the sin of the world,” but, “Behold the Lamb of GOD, and what it cost Him to take away the sin of the world.” If any of us realise what it cost to take away the sin of the world, then our repentance has got to be a really generous one. Go back upon those laws of which I have spoken.

Have you always kept the law of purity? Have you always kept the law of repentance? Have you always kept the law of work, and are you keeping it now? Have you always kept, and are you keeping, the law of witness? Have you kept the law of correspondence, always following the leading of the SPIRIT? Have you kept the law of Day by Day, or are you hurried and worried and flurried, and full of discontent, and with no real belief in the providence of GOD at all? Well, then, tell Him so—that is the point. This is the first way: let the repentance be a generous repentance: “I have broken this and that. I make no excuses about it: I did it, I did the very thing; there is no excuse for me.” Let us, if we are

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to have a generous pardon, make a generous repentance. Think over that before we go on to the next point. Have you generously repented, or are you still half excusing the past? Let my words, by the power of the SPIRIT, move you to make a start with a generous repentance for all that is wrong in the past and in the present.

(2) Then, secondly, if we want to be forgiven properly we must have a *generous amendment*. What do I mean by that? Why, if, for instance, you find you have not kept the law of purity, and you see many breaches of that in thought, and word, and deed, then do not be content with not doing wrong things or thinking wrong things, but fling yourself into a passion to bring purity into the world, to bring a kingdom of purity here, and see if you cannot help others. I find that as we go to these great meetings for men throughout London, one of the most encouraging things has been that those we have brought out—there were fifty young men brought out of one meeting—have acted as stewards at the next meeting, and have been the best workers for the whole of the next twelve months in the cause, in the very place where they had their temptations, in the very place where we had rescued them from sin. Therefore, a generous amendment is flinging yourself into the opposite of your sin. I love to find in temperance work a man, perhaps twenty years after he has been rescued, the firmest worker in the cause, because he has flung himself as an act of amendment from his past sin into trying to spread sobriety among his fellows. “The breastplate of righteousness”—why the breastplate? Because nothing so shelters the

vital parts so much as positive righteousness. We have far too much of, "Have I broken this, have I broken that, have I done wrong here or there?" What we have to do is to fling ourselves into a positive campaign for righteousness. The aggressive policy in war is always the safest. Therefore, if there are any of you who want to be forgiven, let them properly fling themselves into the opposite virtue to the vice which sapped their strength and tripped them up in the past. If, for instance, it is being untruthful or speaking stories against others, turn it into a passion for truthfulness, a passion for charity; see if you cannot spread love and charity where you used to spread bitterness and mischief. The second way, then, to have a real forgiveness is to have a generous amendment.

(3) Then, thirdly, have a *generous faith*. We sometimes find people who go through all the way of repentance, turn away from their sin, go, perhaps, through misery and pain, and then they will not take their forgiveness when it is brought straight down upon them. Faith is as necessary as repentance if we are to be forgiven. When you have repented of the past, when it has been dragged to light, when you see it in its hideousness, when you have told it out to GOD, then lift up your hand and take your forgiveness. You never can sing the *Magnificat* unless you do. It is just as wrong to show want of faith in GOD by not accepting the forgiveness as showing a distrust in Him by not repenting. I may be speaking to some who have done all this, who have really been forgiven, but who have never taken hold of their forgiveness at all. You cannot say, "My soul doth

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magnify the LORD ” ; you cannot sing, “ Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven³ ” ; or—

“ Redeemed, restored, forgiven,
Through JESU’s precious blood !
Heirs of His home in Heaven,
O praise our pardoning GOD ! ”

Take home the fact that that sin has been rolled off your back, taken out of the book, that you are forgiven ; take hold of it with both hands ; take the great gift brought down at such cost from Heaven. It is almost a blasphemy when you have been forgiven not to believe you are forgiven. It was that tremendous cost which made it possible for you to take it with trembling hands and eyes with tears of gratitude in them, and there has been put into them the pardoning sign of peace by JESUS CHRIST Himself. Do not, then, let any lose the glorious spring of their life because they have not a faith generous enough to take the pardon which has been bought for them.

(4) Fourthly, let this generous pardon produce a *generous love* in return. One of the most beautiful sentences in the Bible is this : “ She to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.” That woman in the story in the New Testament knew that she had been forgiven so much, and therefore she loved so much in return. If you are to be forgiven properly, you must love much in return. And that love must be practical. CHRIST said, “ If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” There must, then, be a loving, generous, earnest keeping of the commandments in

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return for our forgiveness. "She to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much"; and if we really believe we have been forgiven, entirely freed from our sin, however great it is, we cannot continue to find fault with everybody, we cannot be jealous because we are not enough noticed, we cannot stand on a pedestal and despise others who sin, but we must go out to help them, because she or he to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much; and there is nothing which melts the heart like a sense of a great forgiveness. I may be speaking to some who cannot forgive an injury, who have a very hard heart about it. Well, there is only one cure: to look up and remember how much you have been forgiven, and at what cost; and then see if that does not help to remove the hardness out of your heart.

(5) Fifthly, if we are to be forgiven with a full and complete forgiveness, there must be loving and *generous service*. What are you going to do after this? What difference is it going to make to your life? Do not go away and say: "Well, we rather enjoyed the service when the Bishop came down here to the church. How different it was from the ordinary kind of service! We had some nice hymns." and then make an end of it. It would be an awful thing if that was the end of it. Missions like these have the power, if we do not resist them, of changing completely the lives of those who attend. Of course, they may not, but if they do not it is simply and entirely our fault. We have resisted the SPIRIT. What the SPIRIT is trying to make us all do, from the Bishop to the youngest boy and girl

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beneath the Cross of JESUS, is to serve, and serve, and serve for the rest of our lives quite patiently to the end. "I am among you as He that serveth," said our LORD as He took the towel and basin, and He did not mind what work He did. He went round and washed Judas's feet. "This commandment," He says, "I give unto you, ye must do as I have done to you ; as I have washed your feet, you must wash one another's feet." Therefore, everyone who is really touched by this Mission will look out and say : "What can I do to serve and help the people with whom I work every day in the factory or the workshop ? Can I help those at home ? Can I bring that brother of mine to repentance and religion ? Can I do any more in the parish ? Does it want any more Sunday-school teachers ? Can I go and visit ? Can I work up the men's service ? Can I help in some little way those who are lying sick ? What can I do to serve ?" Christ said, "Inasmuch as ye do it to the least of these, My brethren, ye do it unto Me." We could not go up and put a sponge full of vinegar to His lips to quench His thirst when He cried "I thirst" ; but we can give now the cup of cold water to His little ones ; and He says that, if done to them, it is done to Him. There is no greater test than this of whether the Mission is to be to us words, words, words ! The whole of life is soon over ; we may never have such a chance again. When a call comes it may never be repeated. There are four of my friends lying dead at this moment. Their dead bodies lie in different houses, and all have died in four days. We never know when exactly the same thing will happen to

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us. Let our fifth resolution then be, "I believe this, I will serve."

"Beneath the Cross of JESUS
I fain would take my stand."

Beneath the Cross of JESUS we have held our Mission, beneath the Cross of JESUS we will confess our sins, and beneath the Cross of JESUS, and nowhere else in the world, shall a great forgiveness settle down upon the hearts and consciences of everyone, and we shall have joy in GOD now, henceforth, and for ever.

HAMMERSMITH PARISH CHURCH

SUNDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Is it a sin to have contracted a debt ?

The writer is evidently very anxious about it, and the debt was apparently contracted from no fault of his own, so far as he states the case. I do not want to make any soul sad whom GOD has not made sad. Of course, it sometimes happens that people, however careful they are, may have to borrow for a time in order to get straight, and they have to pay back the loan gradually. To the questioner I would say that debt must, if possible, be avoided by everybody ; but sometimes it is unavoidable, and, without any sense of sin, he must go on gradually paying back so as to be free in time.

2. Is my idea of second sight true or merely imagination ? Am I right in believing I see the departed ?

I have a very great horror of all this practising of second sight. I believe it is a very dangerous thing. The doctors will tell you that a great many people have gone mad by imagining they are seeing people in the other world. We have no right to try and be wise about that which is written. Reserve your prayer and effort for what are the revealed truths of Holy Scripture.

3. Is fortune-telling by cards or any other medium wrong, and should one who is clever at it discontinue the practice ?

Certainly. All that is a great mistake, I think, and helps to minister to superstitious ideas of which we ought to get rid. There are some ridiculous popular superstitions which we ought to disregard—for instance, that death will happen as the result of thirteen sitting down to dinner. It is a dishonour to the providence of GOD. Yet these ridiculous, silly superstitions haunt the mind, and I hope one of the results of this Mission will be to dissipate some of them.

4. Can you tell me whether the Church of England means the list of fast days at the beginning of the Prayer-Book to be kept, or do they not matter? May one conscientiously ignore all vigils and fasts?

The answer is an obvious one—they would not be in the Prayer-Book if they were not meant to be kept. When we talk about being good Churchmen or good Churchwomen, it must mean at least that we follow the teaching of the Prayer-Book. The keeping of the fasts of the Church is meant to help our spiritual life. We have no right to ignore what is in our Prayer-Book for our guidance. We learn self-discipline by fasting. Our LORD said: “Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and *then shall they fast.*” Therefore undoubtedly my answer is that it is right to observe what the Church has set down in the Prayer-Book.

When you come to the second question, “In what detail are these fasts to be observed?” you touch a very special point in the Church of England, and that is that our Church lays down a principle, but leaves the details very much to individual consciences as to what form the fast should take; it is, however, in accordance with very ancient precedent to abstain on fast-days from flesh meat. I should not like to lay down that rule for invalids and sick persons, because in such cases the rule may be relaxed; nor for special cases. One way to carry out the directions of the Prayer-Book is to abstain from flesh meat on all Fridays and on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent.

5. How can I avoid being oppressed by the thought of self when work is over ?

This is from a worker who in the middle of work gets rid of morbid ideas about self, and especially finds comfort in the choral Eucharist in the village church. Clearly the more we get out of our miserable selves, the more we lose ourselves, the more we find ourselves. All these morbid people who are much given to introspection have not taken their forgiveness, but go on, as it were, haunting the marshy grounds of the sins that have been confessed. Get away from self, and lose yourself in work for GOD.

6. I have suffered horribly from a cruel form of physical misery, with quiet hours only recently. How far the present improvement may be counted on, I do not know. Through this cruel time I have nearly lost my faith, and the loss of faith practically comes under five heads: (1) The uselessness of prayer, because the pain has been continued, and so I have given up prayer. (2) Evidently CHRIST'S sufferings are inadequate compared to the sufferings which others have to bear. (3) The GOD of the Old Testament is so cruel, commanding exterminating wars, and suchlike. (4) A baby of four was beaten to death the other day in a great city. How could a GOD of love have allowed that? (5) And Nature seems "red in tooth and claw." What am I to do?

Every one of these questions would practically need a sermon to itself, but I would ask the questioner to remember on all those five points these five things: (1) I would ask him to read a beautiful sermon in Bishop Wilkinson's "Some Laws in GOD'S Spiritual Kingdom." I was reading in the early morning—that has been my book for early morning reading—a sermon on the text, "Shall not GOD avenge His own elect? yea, He will avenge them speedily." But the Bishop draws out how very long sometimes we have to wait for an answer, and yet the answer comes at last.

The questioner must not think, because the answer is so long delayed, that it will not come at all. The saints cry under the altar, "How long? how long?" The answer will come, though perhaps in a different form from that for which he has asked—"He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him a long life, even for ever and ever." When we pray for release from pain, it may be impossible for it to be relieved in this world; but think of the millions of years of deathless happiness hereafter, when GOD may answer our prayer in His own way. (2) Surely it is not fair to appraise the amount of CHRIST's sufferings by their length. We have seen already what a peerless act it was of GOD the SON to come down into this suffering world at all, to be beaten, to be scourged, to be mocked at, to be crucified. When you think who GOD is, I think it is a very short-sighted view which demands more suffering than CHRIST bore. I know the poor people whom I used to visit years ago used to say, "He suffered more than I am asked to suffer"; and that was, I am certain, the true way to look at it. On Good Friday, when we reach the Cross, we shall have no reason to complain of the suffering of the SON of GOD. So, again, I would ask our friend to read "The Sermon in the Hospital," by Mrs. Hamilton King, which can be got for a shilling—one of the most beautiful things about suffering ever written. I hope our poor friend will read it. (3) With regard to the GOD of the Old Testament being cruel, I hope that all who can will borrow and read Professor Mozley's "Sermons on the Old Testament." He deals with all those questions, and he says it was absolutely necessary for the happiness of the human race that those awful vices which disgraced the ancient world should be killed out. He points out that it was only natural that Abraham should think it was right to sacrifice his son. Even GOD can only get out of each age the morality of which it is capable, and in the very crisis of the story Abraham receives the most striking demonstration that it was not according to the will of GOD that he should sacrifice his son. (4) Then, are we really to blame GOD because

a child of four, horrible as it is (if it is true), was beaten to death ? We have to battle on behalf of GOD, and with GOD, against the murderous cruelty of men who have perverted their free-will to do such devilish deeds. You and I have to help GOD to bring in His Kingdom, so that all the children shall be looked after, according to the sentiments embodied in the Children Act, which has just come into operation, and is a great advance on behalf of suffering children. (5) Then, lastly, ask the naturalist—do not ask anyone else—whether the birds are not happy, whether the animals are not happy on a summer day, whether the rabbits outside the summer wood are not happy ; and he will tell you that the provision by which animals feed on one another—we feed on them ourselves—does not, as a matter of fact, interfere with the happiness of the animal creation. They have no foreknowledge or foresight, and the rabbit or bird that may be killed in a moment is happy up to the time of its death, and in nine cases out of ten is painlessly killed. I hope our brother may find these thoughts some consolation and help in his darkness.

VIII

HAMMERSMITH PARISH CHURCH

SUNDAY EVENING

THE CARE OF GOD

“The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”—
ST. MATT. x. 30, 31.

WHAT I pray about the Mission is this—that, from the youngest little girl in the Sunday-school to the oldest men and women who are fast coming to the end of their earthly pilgrimage, none may let the Mission pass without believing that all of us have the whole of GOD caring for us and attending to us. It is not enough to believe that we have a forty-millionth part of GOD’s attention. Sometimes we are apt to imagine that we have just that amount of attention which GOD can spare for us, but that He has to share up and divide His care for all the people that happen to be alive at any given moment.

I. Now, what I believe to be something which changes life (it seems to me that when one believes it life is on a totally different level altogether; it does not make you selfish, or it ought not to, but it gives extraordinary power and strength and calmness in life) is to believe that you have the whole of

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GOD to care for you, "that the very hairs of your head are all numbered," and that GOD's attention and care and love are devoted to the happiness and the comfort of every single one of His children. Of course, there are many things that tell against that. One poor friend, for instance, cannot believe it because of his pain and the apparent want of answer to his prayer. Others cannot believe it because they see so much suffering among other people. They watch some poor little child, perhaps, tossing on a bed of pain till it dies. Others cannot believe it for the reason urged by a friend who writes about the cruelty of Nature, and the feeding of one animal on another. Now, remember, I am preaching this Mission to myself as well as to you—I am just one amongst you ; just a man here for a short time, a dying man speaking to dying men and women—and I want to explain to you why it is that, in spite of the pain, and in spite of the suffering, and in spite of the death in the world, I do believe that the hairs of our heads are all numbered.

(1) First, because of Nature, because of this much abused Nature that is always being brought up against us. What is there in Nature which helps me ? Why, I find that the GOD Who is superintending those millions of stars and planets has painted with the most infinite care every little shell on the seashore. You may take up any little shell and find the most infinite pains have been bestowed on it, as if there were not another thing to look to in the whole of the great world ; and you will find this whichever way you look. You find the tiniest little cell in one of our brains has been carefully thought out, and every little ligament in our bodies perfectly adjusted. The more you know

about Nature the more wonderful the detail appears. Why are we able to breathe while the earth is spinning away nineteen miles a second through space? Why is it so habitable? Why is it such a beautiful home for GOD'S children? Because some unseen hand has wrapped around it seventy miles of atmosphere to stop the friction and make breathing possible. The same unseen hand has put the earth near enough to the sun to warm it, but not near enough to scorch it. Nature reveals the most infinite care of the great Being Who, if He exists at all, must have produced the world. Somebody must have produced it. I have said at numbers of Mission Services that we could not possibly suppose that the atoms of the universe could throw themselves into the universe. And therefore my first reason for believing in the care of GOD is that, in this much abused Nature, I find the care of the great Creator for each smallest thing. And if the shells are painted like that, and if the sparrows do not fall to the ground, how much more shall our little children who come into the world be cared for? They are of more value than many sparrows.

(2) Then comes a second reason. In speaking about death,* I asked why it was that, in spite of the certainty of death and the gloom of death, it was lighted up by a radiant light. What produced that radiant light? We really came round to one answer—it is because JESUS CHRIST said that death was not the end. You are really reduced to that. When you have given full weight to the instinct of im-

* See Address to Men on "Death" at Hammersmith, pp. 221-233.

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mortality, and the illustration of the candle not going out, immortality is still only a splendid guess. You cannot bury your wife or child "in sure and certain hope" if that is all. When I come to the real ground for Hope, it is that the eternal SON of GOD came down from Heaven to tell us so, and did tell us so, and proved it by rising again; that is what gives me hope to look into a dying face and repeat: "In My FATHER's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." It is exactly the same as to the individual care of GOD. We might have guessed it from Nature, but we could never have proved it for certain. But when I look to see what this eternal SON of GOD did and said, I find not only did He say so in the most tremendously strong language—and who am I to say that He was deceiving the world?—but also He showed it in His actions. It was not merely that He talked about the Good Shepherd, but He went over the mountains to find the one sheep that was lost. It was not merely that He told us about the woman who swept the house to find the lost coin; it was not merely that He told us about the Prodigal Son, whose wanderings caused those at home to be unhappy till he came back; not only did He say, "There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth," but He *was* the Good Shepherd, and He did sound the call of the FATHER until the prodigal came home. He sat upon the well till the woman came, and He looked up to see Zacchæus in the tree. He spoke to the young man individually. Therefore He proved by everything He did that the individual person, the individual child, was the care of GOD. In preaching

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then this to you all—to you children of GOD—I do not preach it because I happen to think it : I preach it to you on the authority of the SON of GOD Himself—“The very hairs of your head are all numbered.” He knows all about your troubles in the workshop, your difficulties at home ; He knows about the poor mother with a family trying to make both ends meet ; He knows the ward where you nurse ; your trials in the school ; your perplexities in the city, and how difficult it is to keep your cares away from the wife and children when you come home.

(3) Thirdly, I believe this because I believe I have found it true in my own experience. I mean this. We are often very apt to deceive ourselves by looking at someone else's life instead of our own. I see someone in great trouble. Perhaps I feel very sorry, and perhaps I say GOD cannot be love to let this man or this woman suffer so cruelly ; but supposing I was that person, I should know something which I cannot know by watching them : I should know how GOD was helping that person. When I look into my own life, I know, when I look back to some sorrow in the past, that I hardly felt it. Why ? Because the Everlasting Arms were carrying me through it. I look at some disappointment as the best thing in the world for me, but other people could not see it. And therefore, what I ask you to do, if you want to believe the great truth I am preaching to you to-night, is to be honest and look into your own life, and I shall be greatly mistaken—provided you are trying to do the will of GOD : you would not find it so if you rebelled against Him, for all the time you

would be unhappy—if you have not found the Everlasting Arms under you, if you have not found comfort in trial, and been lifted through your sorrows by some unseen strength. Have you not found this so ? I venture to say you know you have. Therefore, your experience will bear witness to my experience that, as a mourner said to me beautifully : “ Bishop, the thing works. I have this great sorrow, but my religion works.” What I preach to others I have found to be true. I expect I could collect out of any fifteen hundred people in a great church a thousand or five hundred witnesses who would say ; “ Yes, my experience is like yours. GOD has helped me through my troubles ; He has heard my prayer ; what I read in the New Testament is true.” Then, again, I look round into the experience of the people to whom I have ministered—you cannot live for twenty years working in London without coming across a great many people’s lives, rich and poor, and, of course, people are very apt to imagine there is nothing whatever in East London except unhappiness—I put together my experience of East London and West London, and I have seen again and again the working of GOD towards good, bringing good out of evil, again and again using some sufferer in some home to be the light of that home. I believe, although you cannot judge as well of the lives of others as you can of your own, that almost all of you, if you look round on the individual lives you have known for a long time, will see that what you have been taught in the New Testament is quite true—“ All things work together for good to those who love GOD.”

(4) And then my final proof is in what has happened in the world at large. Why is it—have you ever asked this question?—that all the nations that have disobeyed GOD'S will, and have allowed their family life to degenerate, have broken up and disappeared? As Keble says in the "Christian Year" of certain empires, "they tower, and they are gone."

At any rate, the one successful thing in the world to-day is Christian Missions. They have progressed against apathy, against persecution, against the tide of public opinion, till as we watch the marvellous transformation of one nation after another—China and Japan now opening their arms unexpectedly to the Gospel message—we have a kind of sign in the sky that those who work with GOD are working with a living power and a loving care which justifies itself in the long run.

II. Now, are you going to take home the Gospel of the Care of God? I cannot imagine anything which will so change the whole of your life if you do. And if you say, "Well, Bishop, put in a little more detail as to how we are to look for the care of GOD," I am quite ready to answer your challenge by asking you to take the Gospels for the six Sundays in Epiphany. My dear friend and leader Bishop Wilkinson points that out in one of his books, and you will find in those six Gospels, which I will take in a moment one by one, an almost exact answer to your question, How am I to take home the Gospel of the Care of GOD?

(a) Take the First Sunday after Epiphany—take your Prayer-Books, and on your knees read over those six Gospels. First, "Wist ye not that I must

be about My FATHER's business?" Do you not see that this gives perhaps to half of you the first thing that is wanted? Is GOD first in your life, or is business first, or money first, or your own pleasure first? If it is so, there is no promise that GOD will guide your life at all. Here is the first condition—"GOD first." Does this seem hard? You will find it the simple road to joy. If you have not yet had the joy in GOD which the world cannot take away, it is because you have not put GOD first. If you, whether man or woman, who are listening to me to-night put GOD first, your FATHER's business first, your FATHER's home first, you will find it the first way to be under the care of GOD, and therefore to have joy in GOD.

(b) Then secondly: How is a dull, drab, monotonous life to be turned into a bright Christian life, full of hope and full of the SPIRIT? Look at the Second Gospel. How was water to be turned into wine? "Fill the water-pots with water." That was the way—the exact fulfilment of the next duty, however perfectly useless it seems. Is there something in your life which you have been told to do by your conscience again and again, and which you do not do? Here it is: the next thing to do, useless as it seems, "Fill the water-pots with water, fill them to the brim." The servants could not know what was going to happen when they were working with GOD, but their obedience co-operated with GOD, and He turned the water into wine. It will be the same life after the Mission, the same round of duty, the same home, the same workshop, the same business; but if you can bring the power of GOD into it, and a belief in His

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loving care, the water will become wine, and you will be a happy person.

(c) Or, thirdly, you say : " Bishop, you do not know to whom you are speaking. You are speaking to someone who is full of sin. You have been talking to us as if we were all good, prayerful people. I have not been inside a church this year or for five years. I have unclean imaginations, and my life will not bear looking into. How can I possibly claim the care of GOD ?" Look at the Third Gospel. " LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. I will ; be thou clean." Of course, you cannot have the peace of GOD which passeth all understanding if you do not look into that unclean past, if you do not face the facts of your life. How can you or any of us expect it ? But the glorious thing is that the care of GOD is shown in curing you of that uncleanness, and if you say from your heart really a heartfelt prayer, " LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," if you take the steps we have talked of so often early in the Mission—repentance, confession, and real abandonment of the sin—you may be clean, and receive that glorious trust in the care of GOD, which you cannot have until you are cured. Try ; for GOD'S sake let not this Mission leave any soul still in the uncleanness of its sin.

(d) But you say : " That is not exactly my difficulty. I am more troubled by the waves and storms which have gone over me ; wave after wave of trouble breaks over me. How am I to have the peace of GOD ?" Read the Fourth Gospel. When all the waves and storms were beating over the boat. there

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was our LORD calm, asleep on the pillow (as St. Peter also afterwards was—"when they would have brought him out Peter was sleeping"), in perfect trust and childlike confidence. But they cried, "LORD, save us, we perish"; "and He arose and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm." Have you got JESUS in the boat with you? Have you trusted in your trouble to His calm, powerful, living words? Then cry to Him, with more faith than the disciples had: "LORD, save me, or I perish!" He rebuked them for their little faith. But, anyhow, they had enough faith to cry to Him. If, with what faith you have, you cry to Him to-night, you shall have peace.

(e) But you say: "What troubles me is not so much outward persecution, or even the inward disease of sin, but the sight of the good and the bad so much mixed up in the world. This man who passes as a good man, I know he is not a good man; and in my place where I work the evil seem prosperous, and the good do not get on half so well. If all this you are preaching is true, let GOD turn evil out of the world altogether." Read, then, the Fifth Gospel: "Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest He will say to the reapers," and so on. Do you not realise that it is part of our trial that the tares and the wheat should grow together? We have to disentangle one by one the tares out of our own hearts and the hearts of others, but we cannot demand as a proof of the care of GOD or the power of GOD that all the tares shall be immediately torn out, lest, if they be torn out, the wheat be torn out with them. And therefore we

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must not let our faith in GOD'S love and care demand something which we are clearly told we shall not have.

(f) "Fret not thyself, then, because of the ungodly, nor be thou envious against evil-doers." It is all coming right. If you ask how I know, look at the Sixth Gospel, and there you will find the triumph depicted when the great victory comes at last, and the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER Who is in Heaven. It is all coming, the complete and final victory of the good, when, in His own good time, our GOD shall be justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged.

What, then, does it come to? How are we to spend our time? If we take this message seriously, we should spend our time first in self-examination. Are we worthy of this tremendous care and trust, or are we working against GOD in any way, or is there something in which we will not work with Him? Our self-examination is to show if this is so. Secondly, we must pray for a greater revelation of GOD'S care, for power to conform our will to His, for more grace and more strength. Thirdly, we must ask ourselves whether we cannot work with GOD more, whether there is something more which we could do. We prayed just now that we might be an instrument of salvation to some one soul. Where is that soul? Is there anyone we might bring to the Mission who wants spiritual help? And lastly, we must trust. As we think over all these beautiful truths, let us ask ourselves whether we believe that, in trusting ourselves to this great love, the very hairs of our head are all

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numbered. Why should not I hold to this great love, and make my own the words sent up by one in the Mission, which we should all try to make the motto of our lives ?

‘ LORD, for to-morrow and its needs I do not pray :
Keep me, my GOD, from stain of sin just for to-day ;
Help me to labour earnestly and duly pray,
Let me be kind in word and deed, FATHER, to-day.

‘ And if to-day this life of mine should ebb away,
Give me Thy Sacrament Divine, FATHER, to-day.
So for to-morrow and its needs I do not pray ;
Still keep me, guide me, love me, LORD, through each
to-day.”

HAMMERSMITH PARISH CHURCH

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Does GOD love us, however unlovable we are, and however unlovable we continue to be ?

This is evidently from a rather despairing soul. The answer is: GOD does go on loving us. He loves us for what we are capable of becoming. And yet, of course, we do please GOD more when we get out of whatever there is in us which is displeasing Him. We are all children of GOD, but as many as are *led* by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are peculiarly sons of GOD. Therefore I would ask this soul who sends up this question not to be content with being unlovable, but to try, carrying out the message of the Mission, to let GOD see His face in his or her character. GOD does love you, goes on loving you, loves you now. Have a little more faith and hope to enable Him to help you.

2. I have been trying for some time past to reconcile the teaching of the Evangelical school and that of the High Church school on the question of present salvation, and so on. What is Justification by Faith? Certain passages of Holy Scripture are quoted, as, for instance: "He that believeth has passed from death unto life."

It is impossible in one answer to give what it would take a sermon to explain; but I would like to refer you to the best and cheapest book I know of on Justification by Faith, which gives exactly what the questioner wants, and shows the marvellous intermingling, as it were, of the two points of

view—Bishop Gore on the “Epistle to the Romans.” It is a very clear book, explaining very beautifully that the hand of faith which takes in no sense does away with the reality of the gift that is taken. The Bishop works this out in that and his other books. I have no doubt that on other points it might be less easy to reconcile the two schools of thought; but on this point there ought to be no sort of contradiction between the gift that is granted and the hand of faith that takes it. The faith that receives does not contradict in the least the fact that there is a gift to receive. Take the gift of the Holy Communion. Very few of the Evangelical school disbelieve that there is a real gift to receive in the Holy Communion. They do not define it—indeed, many of us shrink from definition—but they insist strongly that there is necessity for faith. So does the High Churchman. If you read these clear statements of doctrine, such as are contained in the Bishop of Birmingham’s books on the Romans and on the Holy Communion, you will no longer be baffled by an unreal distinction between the hand that takes and the gift which is received.

3. What is “a state of salvation”?

I have quoted elsewhere an illustration which I think explains what is meant by a state of salvation.* I was describing a few hours ago, at a meeting for the West London Hospital, the case of a man whom I happened to see wounded as I was passing the West London Hospital, and whom I helped to send into the hospital. What is the difference between that man lying wounded in the street and the same man admitted into the West London Hospital? In the hospital he is in a state in which he can be healed. He is in a far higher state of privilege than he was when he was lying in the street; but if he were not to obey the doctors, and not to submit to the nurses’ treatment, he might die in the West London Hospital, good and excellent as that hospital is. Now do you see what Baptism does for us? We are lifted

* See p. 209.

out of the cold world into a state of salvation, into a state of privilege ; we are brought into the great hospital for sick souls which JESUS CHRIST built when He was on earth. Is that nothing ? (We believe we receive in Baptism also a real spiritual gift ; but I am illustrating the point about the present state of salvation.) No one that I know teaches that, because you are brought into the Church, whatever you do, regardless of whether you are faithful, or careless, you are going to be saved in the Church. You are in a state in which you *may* be saved, but only he that endureth to the end, the same will be saved. Therefore, do not let us have people divided from one another by what is a pure misunderstanding. The illustration of the hospital seems to me to aptly meet the case.

4. How can I control my thoughts more ?

There really is only one way—to cry to GOD : “ GOD, help me ! JESUS, help me ! ” And I will ask any one of those who, when some horrible thought has come, perhaps in the watches of the night, have said, “ JESUS, help me ! ” if there has not come down some otherwise inexplicable power which has driven the bad thought away ? This shows that we are in touch with a real and living strength. Try what is called the *aversia mentis*—turning the mind away from what is wrong, turning it to GOD.

5. How is it that the power of healing has been lost ?

Has it been lost ? I believe myself that the work of the healing profession is a work of GOD. It seems to me that JESUS CHRIST was the prototype both of the faithful pastor and the faithful physician. The physician as well as the pastor comes to me when I am ill from JESUS CHRIST. What GOD has joined together let no man put asunder. If some of the medical profession have divorced the idea of their profession from GOD, that is their fault. The nursing and healing profession was, I believe, meant to be only less sacred than that of the priest. Such work may be done for

JESUS CHRIST. But more than that. I think that we have slipped out of the belief in the Church—and certainly the Lambeth Conference endorsed this idea—that we can marvellously help the poor sufferer by helpful prayers. If you read the Lambeth Conference report, you will see that we practically acknowledge that we should all of us pray more for the recovery of the sufferer, and not only for his resignation to the sickness. We have got into the way of only praying for resignation in sickness. I can remember myself—I think I may use this illustration, although it is rather sacred to me—I can remember one who was in a state of utter collapse before an operation. The surgeon said they could not operate at all, and I was sent for to come and try to help the patient, and I was with her for some time. The next day or the day after she walked without a tremor, and lay down on the operating-table, and the three surgeons said, “What has the Bishop of London done to you?” and she looked round and said: “Something which none of you could have done.” Now, I believe that there was no miracle about it. The recovery of the faith and hope of the person who was in a state of collapse, the getting back the faith and hope which once she had—that is a thing which the Christian Church can accomplish, and ought to accomplish, more than it does do. My answer then would be: The power of healing in one sense has not been lost. The power of faith and love can immensely help the patient.

6. Can we be sure we shall know and love our dear ones in Paradise?

There is a similar question on the same subject about the doctrine of Purgatory, and, again, another: “Is it right to pray for the departed?” Let me answer those three questions together. Five minutes after death I believe we shall be the same as five minutes before, with one more change, one more incident in our existence. Death is only an incident in life; it is not the end of life; therefore, those whom we have loved are the same. “Behold and see that it is I Myself,” said JESUS

Answers to Questions

CHRIST. They must, then, still love us, they must be praying for us; so we can go on remembering them in our prayers, too.

“Grant them, O LORD, eternal rest, and let everlasting light shine upon them!” This is what the Church has prayed from the earliest days. Now, if that is so, these three questions are answered. Surely we *shall* know our loved ones in Paradise, because they will be the same as on earth; a growth in grace in the sunny land of Paradise is what we may look forward to for those we love. So, again, it would be simply the most unnatural thing in the world for the mother who had prayed for her son all his life to cease to remember him before GOD because he had passed into the other world. It is quite true that the saints can do without our prayers, and the Church has only prayed in a most general way for rest and light for them, leaving it to GOD to answer the prayer in His own way; but there need be no sense of anything wrong in remembering our dear ones before GOD, for the simple reason that they are *not* dead. They are more alive than they ever were before.

7. Do you accept the Darwinian theory of evolution?

To a very large extent I do. There is not the slightest contradiction between the belief that the body of man was gradually evolved and the belief in a Creator. It really is much more difficult, if you think of it, to create some matter which would evolve itself into a watch than to make a watch straight off. You would require a creator for the watch just the same. It is, then, a foolish idea to suppose that the theory of evolution—which, of course, is only a theory—does anything to upset the idea of GOD. GOD is wanted just as much for evolution as He is for any other theory of creation.

8. Is the Old Testament historically true, or only a collection of legends?

That is a big question. Read, for instance, Dr. Ryle's “Early Narratives of Genesis”; read Geikie's “Hours with the Bible.” Any book like either of those will answer the

question for you. Broadly speaking, of course, the Old Testament is distinctly historically true, and many events in the Old Testament are illustrated by inscriptions to be seen in the British Museum.

9. Do you believe in the Virgin-birth of our LORD ?

Certainly I do. I think it is one of the most beautiful doctrines which we hold, implying a new start and a new creation given to mankind, and a new fountain of purity, as it were, unsealed for the human race.

10. Do you believe the miracles in the New Testament actually occurred ?

Certainly I do ; and if you read a book like Godet's " Defence of the Faith," or Milligan on " The Resurrection of our LORD JESUS CHRIST," you will see that the Resurrection is better attested than any event that ever happened.

11. Did our LORD rise in the body or merely in the spirit ?

I believe myself intensely in what I call the Gospel of the Empty Tomb. You will find that the story of Easter Day centres round an empty tomb. Latham's book, " The Risen Master," will illustrate for you the Gospel of the Empty Tomb, which is the spring of our hope on Easter Day.

12. May I ask why you are a teetotalter ? Is the Kingdom of Heaven higher than food and drink ?

I am a teetotalter to try and help other people. I have been a teetotalter for about twenty-five years, because, in my ministerial work, I found many of my brothers were tempted to drink. The fact that I was not myself tempted did not in the least prevent my feeling that even CHRIST did not please Himself. CHRIST did not claim His rights ; He laid His rights aside. Therefore, if you can help a brother by

laying aside any right you have, it seems to me you are only trying to follow Him in the right spirit. I did not mean by becoming a teetotaler to say that any creature of GOD was in itself evil. In the light of all those petitions we have put up for those who are under the curse of drink, I think it would be a good thing if many more were teetotalers.

13. The writer gives a number of quotations from the Bible to show that the Bible teaches, and strongly, that death is the end of man. This is the sort of passage: "For we must all needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered up." "The dead know not anything." "As the cloud is consumed, so is he that goeth down to the grave to come up no more." "There is hope for a tree; if it is cut down, it will sprout again, but man dieth and wasteth away." Can you explain this?

The idea that the Bible is one book by one writer is wrong. The Bible is a history of a revelation, and the particular writers who wrote many of these passages had a very vague idea of immortality at all. What I said on Sunday afternoon was that it was JESUS CHRIST Who had brought life and immortality to light; it was He Who came from Heaven. We cannot put St. John's Gospel and the Book of Ecclesiastes on the same level. To do so would be absurd. The Book of Ecclesiastes has a use, and has teaching for us, but the whole of the Old Testament is the record of a gradual revelation, and that is the great interest of it. Some of the books were written by people who had a very uncertain and vague idea of the full truth of GOD. CHRIST is the end of it all. It is an unintelligent view of the Bible to pick out a text in the Old Testament, and put it on the same level as a text giving the full revelation in the actual words of JESUS CHRIST Himself. You must get rid of the idea that the Bible can be treated as if it was all on the same level. Even GOD can only get out of each age the morality of which that age is capable.

14. What are the relations of the persons of the HOLY TRINITY to one another ?

I have never denied that there is a great and holy mystery about the HOLY TRINITY. It is one of those things we are simply told as much of as we can understand. I could prove to you, if I had time, from the Bible that the existence of three Persons in one GOD is the revelation of the New Testament. Take, for instance, the Baptism of our LORD. The FATHER speaks, the SON is in the water, and the HOLY SPIRIT descends in bodily form as a dove. There are the three Persons, and yet there is the unity of the one GOD breathing through everything. Therefore, you who write to me and say, "How could GOD be here and be there at the same time?" are really leaving out what is a truth of the Christian Church—that there are three Persons in one GOD.

15. Is not intercessory prayer a binding duty? May we really go on with continual supplication? Ought we not to leave the matter with GOD?

Of course, we are warned against vain repetitions, but, on the other hand, we are encouraged to go on praying in a simple way for what we need. Even our LORD prayed in the same words over and over again in the Garden of Gethsemane.

16. I have a friend who is now living in deadly sin, but does not think it is sin. She is partly a Christian scientist; she believes in the power of GOD. What can I do to help her?

There is only one thing to do for a soul like that—we must go on praying for her, using our influence and our powers of persuasion, bringing home by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT the teaching of the Bible to convict her of sin first, and then, but not till then, the gospel of pardon. There is no royal road to peace. There must be conviction of sin first, then honest repentance, then confession, then absolution, then restitution, then amendment. That is the road to the peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding.

IX

HAMMERSMITH PARISH CHURCH

WEDNESDAY EVENING

HOW TO TRUST

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”—1 PET. v. 7.

I HAVE asked you to think over the fact that every one of you has all GOD and all His love and all His care at your disposal. I am not saying that this is a complete Gospel. It would be a very, very narrow Gospel if we were simply to be content to believe that GOD is caring about us; and at the same time it would be a very cold Gospel, and a very comfortless Gospel, if we imagined that we had to share GOD'S love and care with forty millions or any other number of people. Because GOD is infinite, you have got the whole of GOD attending to you.

Now, if that is so, what is our response to be? I am going to call this instruction “How to Trust.” We have had “How to Repent”; we have had “How to Love God Better”; we have had “How to be Forgiven”; let us consider now “How to Trust.” I do not think we can take a better definition of “How to Trust” than the one quoted—“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

Now, what I long to be able to feel is that, at any

How to Trust

rate, every single one who has come to the Mission has cast all his care upon GOD, and believes that He cares for him. I should go on happily if I thought that. The first thing to realise is that this is not so easy a thing to do as it appears. I was very much touched by one letter sent to me, which said that, while the writer tried to do this, there was a worry which came again and again, and even in church the worry was there; there is sensation of being haunted about a real worry. Such a worry it is much harder to cast upon GOD than it seems to be when you merely speak of casting your care upon GOD. I may be speaking to some like the person who wrote to me, who was suddenly face to face with the necessity of finding a home for those he or she loved. What was to be done? Something must be done in a month. Or, again, there may be an illness, which comes quite unexpectedly to some dear one. There the worry is. It is easy enough to say "Cast it upon GOD," but it is not as easy as it seems to be. I want to face that. I believe many people speak of these things too lightly, and we can get no further unless we realise the difficulties of what we are going to try to do. So again, in one sense, you cannot cast it upon GOD: you must keep it to yourselves. We are told, "Bear ye one another's burdens." Yes; but every man must bear his own load. That is what it ought to be. The words are not the same in the Greek. "Bear ye one another's burdens; but every man must bear his own load." And that load means his load of responsibility. In one sense I cannot cast my care—the care of the Diocese of London—off myself, because GOD has

How to Trust

put it on me. You cannot cast off the care of being a mother of a family; you cannot cast off the care of your girls' club; because you have got it. Do not, then, let us be unreal over this. We have still got to have that load; we have still got to use our forethought and our foresight about our family, our club, or our diocese. We are told to be over-anxious for nothing; but, on the other hand, we are told that if a man does not look out for his own people, he is worse than an infidel.

We must, then, realise (1) that it is true to say that there is a great difficulty in obeying the command; and (2) that you must still have the care in a sense.

I. What does this saying of St. Peter's mean? How are we to trust? (1) I will tell you, in answer to that, what I believe to be the greatest truth in the world, and that is—of course, the world does not believe this—that you may have care, and yet not notice the care. The care is there, but you can be so lifted up by GOD that you do not feel the care. That is the whole difference. You and the care are carried up in the Everlasting Arms, the care on the top of you, so to speak—that is what is promised—"Casting all your care upon Him." Because both of you—you and the care—are carried, you do not feel it. I received a letter from someone in distress, which I answered as well as I could, and the response was a letter of great gratitude: "Yes; the trouble is still here, but I do not somehow seem to feel it now so much." That is really the experience of which I spoke, when I appealed to the experience of those who tried to trust GOD, that help did come;

How to Trust

some unseen hand did seem to come and lift the burden off. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." "No one can pluck you out of your FATHER'S hand." All these promises, when they are tested, work: they are found true. I am not speaking now of the burden of sin; I want to leave that out for a moment, but I say that the burden of care, the trouble that you have as the father of a family, the worry of making enough to keep them; the anxiety which you have as a mother; or the responsibility of a teacher for her children, can be cast off; if you appeal to GOD, you shall have a strength which will so lift you up that you shall not feel that care.

(2) Then, the second thing is to bear that care in the strength of GOD—we have often spoken of this, but I want to say it again now—day by day. We said at the very beginning of the Mission that the law of Day by Day was one of the laws of the Kingdom; but here is the place to bring in the law of Day by Day. You have only got to bear that trouble one day at a time. GOD promises strength for the day. Make the law of Day by Day one of the laws of your life. If you carry nothing away from this Mission but the law of Day by Day, you will have carried away a most precious truth which will help you all through life—one day at a time, with daily prayer and daily strength given.

(3) Then, again, if you want to have your own burden lightened, be very ready to help with the burdens of others. The person who finds his burden intolerable is the self-absorbed person. It is extraordinary, when anyone will go out and lend a hand

with somebody else's burden, how his own burden seems lighter in a moment. It only shows that we were never meant to live selfish, self-absorbed lives. "Bear ye one another's burdens"—you may almost so change the sentence, "and you will be able to bear your own load." Therefore, do look round—let this be another resolution—to see whether you are living a self-centred life. There are plenty of burden-bearers. Cannot you lend a hand to somebody with a burden? Is there no one here poorer than yourself? You might go and help a bit those who have a more difficult time than yourself. You might just go and give them a hand with their burden. You will find that yours becomes half as heavy. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and you will be able to bear your own load." I say it again.

(4) Then, fourthly, bear your burden with all the GOD-given help which is at your disposal. I do not know really how a man can justify himself for sinking under his burden if he has never used the strength which is at his disposal. If he does not pray at all, how can he expect to get strength? Or, I go further—if he is not confirmed? Why should you not come and be confirmed? Confirmation means strengthening. Why should you not, then, come out and be confirmed if you want to be strengthened by the HOLY SPIRIT? If any of you are doubtful about Confirmation, read the eighth and the nineteenth chapters of the Acts, and see that this falling of the HOLY GHOST came with the laying on of hands. "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST; for as yet He had fallen on none of them." Or, again, what about the Holy Communion? How can

you complain of sinking under your burden or being tired of the journey of life, if you do not use the food for the journey? I think one of the most delightful sayings of the Bible was uttered when Elijah was weary. He heard a voice saying to him: "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee." It was just like GOD'S careful thought for His servant! There was the food ready for him. But is not the food ready for us? I love to hear the voice saying at the Holy Communion, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." Do you not think we have a very bad case if we faint under our burden or under our cross when we have not taken the means ordained by GOD to receive the spiritual strength by which to bear them? As we, then, try and make our response and cast our care upon GOD, remember these things. The promise is that you and your care will be carried. You have got it: you have got to keep it; but you will not feel it: you will have it carried day by day; you will carry it all the easier by helping others with their burden; and you will carry it most easily of all if you use all the means by which GOD'S strength will come into you.

II. And now, just to turn the question round, I will put almost the same answer in different words. How to trust?—that is the question. It is to be such a trust as a child has in its father. What are the characteristics of perfect trust? (1) First, the trust that *obeys*. There is no good in a trust that does not. You may put aside altogether the idea that you are trusting properly if there is any known thing which your father wants you to do, and you don't do it. After all, obedience is the test of trust. "If

ye love Me, keep My commandments." Those who trust their father obey his lightest word ; it is far more than any feeling. It is not a question of working ourselves up into feeling ; it is the personal obedience of the child which is the real test.

(2) Secondly, it is a trust that *works*. What more is there to be done here that you have not done ? I do not know your lives. If I were speaking to you one by one, and we went into it, I have no doubt I might be able to suggest something which you might do for GOD that you are not doing. Is this trust we are speaking of simply a trust which issues in no action, which issues in no work for Him ? That is not the right kind of trust. When the whole world is crying out for help, ours must be a trust that works.

(3) Thirdly, it is a trust that *ventures*. I think myself that we do not make anything like enough ventures of faith. We are making a venture of faith in the diocese now—a venture of faith in building a theological college for London. At this particular time it is a great venture of faith. And yet I feel it is a venture of faith we are justified in making, in order to have a more efficient ministry in the Church of England. I hope that venture of faith will be recognised by GOD, and that He will supply us with the funds that we need. But you may have ventures of faith in your individual life. A girl may know she ought not to be in the place where she is, and yet it seems a great venture of faith to leave it. She must make a venture of faith if she trusts. She may not know where she is going. I have seen several off lately to Australia and Africa. It is a great venture of faith for them to go. (4) Fourthly, it is a

trust that rejoices, that has "joy in GOD, whatever happens." I am certain that the child of GOD who really believes, in this superintending care ought to have more joy; I do not think anything ought to be able to drag us down if we believe it. This childlike trust ought to fill us every day with the spirit of that very hymn we shall sing presently—~~"LORD, give me Samuel's mind."~~—with a real joy that the world can neither give nor take away. (3) Lastly: it must be a trust that rests. "When they would have brought him forth, Peter was sleeping." Surely, when you think of it, there is something very touching in the perfect trust of that servant of GOD: when the very next day he might have been led out to be executed, and probably would have been, he was simply sleeping like a child, secure in the personal presence of the FATHER.

Well, now, shall we try all together—I need it quite as much as you—shall we try, in answer to the message of the Mission, "The hairs of your head are all numbered," to look up to GOD, and offer the trust which is the true corollary to belief in the message, the trust that obeys, the trust that works, the trust that ventures, the trust that rejoices, and the trust that rests! Surely, if we do that, GOD will look down and say: "This is a beloved child, in whom I am well pleased."

ST. JOHN'S, WALHAM GREEN

SUNDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. If you go back upon a sin long, long since, which you thought forgiven, is it a sign that you have not been forgiven? I seem to have become possessed of the memory of it.

I want to make all clear about this. It is just as bad not to have faith that you are forgiven as not to repent as a preparation for forgiveness. The reason we have not got that spring in the Church, the "joy in GOD, whatever happens," which is the message of the Mission, is either because we have not repented of our sins, or have not realised them, or have not faced them, or, having faced them, having confessed, we have not put both hands up and taken our forgiveness. You who send up this question have repented, have confessed, have amended, have made restitution, and been absolved; then nothing can stop your receiving forgiveness. But you say: "How can I forget my awful sin?" You cannot forget it, but what you have to do is to remember it as a sin forgiven. That is the meaning of, "She to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much." Because you look back on that awful sin in the past, it should stir you up, not to morbid memory, but to service. "I was forgiven that sin. I see now how black it was, much more than when I confessed it, but I must love much in consequence. My life must be quite changed. I must work with more fervour, because I have been forgiven." Instead of thinking you are not forgiven, because you remember that sin, let the memory of it give

you devotion, love, gratitude, thanksgiving, because you remember how bad it was:

“ Redeemed, restored, forgiven,
Through JESU’s precious Blood !
Heirs of His home in Heaven,
Oh, praise our pardoning GOD !
Praise Him in tuneful measures,
Who gave His SON to die ;
Praise Him Whose sevenfold treasures
Redeem and sanctify.”

2. When you repent of a sin, and you know that if you lived your life over again you would not only want to do it, but you would do it, is your repentance genuine ?

That is a very serious question, but I have no sort of doubt about the answer. If you want not to do it, long not to do it, if you had your life over again, then you have really repented, because you might merely be saying, “ I feel so weak that perhaps I should do it over again.” But if, as you look back, the thought and the memory of it is so poisonously sweet that you cherish the memory of it, and would do it again, you have not repented at all, you have not learnt to hate it at all, you have not learnt to look at it as GOD looks at it. What you must learn to do is to see that sin in its true light. Repentance is a change of mind, a change of mind about the past, present, and the future, and you have not changed. You love that sin as much as you loved it when you did it, and therefore you must repent. We must all repent if there is any sin in the past which we know we should do again.

3. If I have caused another to sin, and that soul has died in sin without repentance, is not my own sin eternal ?—that is, beyond repentance and forgiveness also. But even if I were forgiven myself, could this be happiness to me if on the Judgment Day I was met by that soul, lost because of my sin ?

That is a most awful question, and it is one that undoubtedly haunts the minds of many, and I do not want for a moment to minimise the responsibility of irremediably in this world injuring a soul. There may be some of you to whom that question may well go home. If there is somebody at this moment in your life whose soul, as a matter of fact, you are injuring, how would you feel if that soul died to-night? Before it is too late ask yourself that question. I remember seeing a young man as to whom I should have felt, if I had not been able to give a certain answer to him, that his blood was always on my soul. He asked me a question, and on my answer depended whether he would do a certain thing or not. He asked me if I had ever done it, and if I had not been able to look him in the face thirty years ago and say, "On my honour, I have not," he would have done it. And when I saw him killed a few months afterwards, lying dead among his sisters, I should certainly have felt that my influence, I being five years older than he was, had made him live those last months wickedly, whereas he died, thank GOD ! a pure-souled boy. I say that, because I do not want to hide the awfulness of this question. But, on the other hand, my message is not a message of despair to you. GOD is the GOD of hell as well as of Heaven. Read Canon Holmes's most instructive book on Immortality, and you will find a beautiful chapter upon GOD as the GOD of hell as well as the GOD of Heaven. That soul, then, is not out of the reach of GOD. There are not two GODS. To hear some people talk, one might think there were two GODS, one called the Devil, and the other called GOD. Nothing of the kind. There is only one GOD, and He is GOD of Heaven and earth and hell. And therefore you must just leave yourself humbly at the foot of the Cross, telling out your sin, hiding nothing back. Confess your sin at the Cross with tears of penitence, and pray that GOD in His mercy may undo the harm you did to that soul. We are saved by hope in the all-fatherly, all-strong love of GOD. You may be mistaken in thinking that soul was really lost. You did your very worst to wreck its life, but GOD was stronger than you.

4. Shall I go on praying, asking for the same thing over and over again, or just pray once and leave it to GOD?

We have in Gethsemane a very distinct justification of praying over and over again the same thing. Our LORD, you remember, prayed over and over again the same words, but He always said: "If it be Thy will, let this cup pass from Me." It was, as we shall see presently, a real trial, a real struggle. The LORD of life faced a shameful death; and therefore you can go on praying over and over again for the same thing, so long as you say: "If it be Thy will." Then you will be praying as JESUS CHRIST prayed Himself.

X

ST. JOHN'S, WALHAM GREEN

SUNDAY EVENING

THE SACRIFICE OF GOD

“Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame.”—HEB. xii. 2.

I WANT to think over with you the great tragedy of the world. I say “the great tragedy of the world” because we are very much too apt to take the Cross entirely for granted. I do not know anything more awful than the way in which we English people get Gospel-hardened. Sometimes even those who come to church quite regularly get so accustomed to the religious talk they hear there that the words become like coins that have been used too often: they have lost their edge. We wear crosses, we talk about the Cross, but what I want to bring home to you, and to realise more in my own soul, is that it is the awful tragedy of the world. Just think what it might have been, just think how the SON of GOD might have come to His people. We all of us know a few really good people—we are very unfortunate if we do not—we all know one or two really noble men, one or two pure, selfless, holy women, and we know that the really good are most attractive. Do not imagine that goodness is dull,

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drab, and unattractive. Sometimes there is dulness in good people—that is the dross; but if I want to have really attractive, interesting companions, the best in the world, the most lastingly interesting comrades, give me the good people I know, the really good, with none of your little meannesses and pettinesses and insincerities. Those are the people you can really trust in the world. Now, if the world had been made up, as was intended by GOD, of good people and pure little children, and the noble men and true-hearted women whom GOD designed should live here, what a different thing the Incarnation would have been. We cannot believe for a moment that we owe the great gift of the world, the coming of the SON of GOD, to our sin. If you think so, read Bishop Westcott on what he calls “The Gospel of the Incarnation.” No, it must always have been the plan of GOD to have come and shown Himself to His people in human form; but in what a different way! Those pure children, those good men and women, they would have welcomed Him with a marvellous welcome; they would have found in Him the perfect ideal they had been looking for. They would have heard about Him, had messages from Him, seen, as it were, pictures of Him in their minds; but when they really saw Him, the perfect beauty, the ideal of goodness, the ideal of holiness, the ideal of love, how they would have worshipped Him as one man, welcomed Him with open arms, loved Him, cherished Him! And when He went back they would have followed Him back to Heaven with adoring love, devotion, and praise. But, as a matter of fact, the world crucified Him, battered Him, hated Him, persecuted Him—the thing is per-

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fectly awful to think of. Contrast what would have been, what might have been, with the awful thing which happened. Why, I can imagine a spirit from earth going up to the other world, and the other spirits on its appearance saying: "Where do you come from, spirit?" "I come from the earth," would be the reply. "The earth! we cannot have you here; the earth is that horrible place where our King was crucified." And we could not blame them if that had been the answer. When I think that, besides those who live here, there are probably thousands and millions whom God has created elsewhere, who worship the same King with absolute devotion, with a perfect love, with flawless obedience, and that as far as we know we are the only body of created spirits that ever did such an awful thing before earth and sky, I wonder sometimes how we hold our heads up so cheerfully as human beings at all. Earth must be known through all the universe and all creation as the awful place where this terrible thing happened. And we take it for granted, talking about the Cross as a matter of course! There is something all wrong about this; we have become Gospel-hardened; we do not realise actually what happened.

Now let me try and describe to you what did happen. I have had one or two questions asked this Mission about the sufferings of CHRIST, as to whether other people did not suffer quite as much as He did; but we must not look at the question as if we only had to consider the hours during which He hung upon the Cross. Have you ever been misrepresented? Have you ever done a thing in perfect innocence, really out of love for the good of another,

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and had that thing taken and repeated, and misrepresented, and turned into an ugly rumour against yourself, going up and down the country? That is what JESUS CHRIST endured over and over again. There was no more loving, trustful soul that ever came into this world, and yet from the moment that He entered it, from the moment He began His work of love, He was watched with a malice and malignity that twisted every word He spoke, and turned every innocent gesture into something wrong. If He spoke out the truth about Himself, they said He was blaspheming; if He kept silence and lived quietly down in the country districts, they said He was ashamed to show His face and come out into the open. If He was found talking to a woman, they did not say anything to His face, but they talked behind His back about it. If He used a simple illustration about the temple of His body, it was put round in a few hours that He was going to destroy the Temple and build it up again in three days. There was no one ever watched with such malignity and spiteful malice—and by human beings, mind you—than the most loving, pure, innocent soul that ever breathed. Have you ever been misunderstood by your friends? have you ever had people say of you: “I wish he would not do that; I wish he would take a more popular line. I do believe in him, but how stupid of him it is just to do the thing which is so much misunderstood by everybody”? Have you ever seen numbers of friends around you, and then afterwards found the friendships cool off gradually, and then at a crisis found cold looks, and no one to stand by you? It is even worse to be misunderstood by your

friends than to be misrepresented by your enemies, and JESUS CHRIST endured that all the time. "They walked no more with Him." "Why will He do those unpopular things? why not take the right line, and keep the popular enthusiasm round Him? why talk about that dreadful Cross?" He saw it all—the cold looks and the fervour getting more and more lukewarm, and the distrust coming into His friends' faces—and at last it all came to a point; they all forsook Him, and fled—they, the only people out of all the human beings of the world whom He expected to help Him—that is what they did when it came to a crisis. Have you ever been betrayed? have you told someone a little private secret rather shyly, trusting to his honour, and then found it told to someone who dislikes you, and then repeated until the story of the little confidence has gone out into the cold unsympathising world? Have you ever opened up a little bit of your home-life, and let someone come in, in all innocence, who was trusted to see a little bit of your home, and then found it held up to ridicule to the world afterwards? Have you ever felt all the bitter sense of being betrayed in your trust? Well, then, you will understand a little bit what JESUS CHRIST endured. He was betrayed in His most tender confidences. At the very place where they knew He would be praying (He let a friend know where He went) He was caught. Because He had an affectionate way with Him of greeting His friends, that very kiss was turned into the signal for His betrayal. "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" It was peculiarly galling that it was done with a kiss, and therefore down at the bottom of His sensitive human

heart JESUS knew what betrayal was. He felt as you felt when your friend acted like that. "Betrayed ! whom shall I trust now ? I trusted this one and that one ; I cannot trust anybody now." And then you know that all this will break your mother's heart, the mother who looked upon you as such a certain success, who was so wrapped up in your success, so pleased when you were popular, and who will find the sight of cold looks and friends drifting away, and the sound of ugly stories infinitely harder to bear than you do yourself. JESUS CHRIST went through that. He could not explain anything, but had to go on simply enduring it. We are apt to talk about the comfort of CHRIST having His mother with him at the Cross ; it was one of the saddest things about it. He looked from the Cross at the mother whom He loved, and knew that she would see Him a perfect failure, that she would see Him held up with every mark of scorn by the religious world as a bad man, and would hear all the shocking things said against Him with her own ears. And He went through that. And there was never any chance of explanation till the cold grave came. He bore it right on. He went on with the misrepresentation, and the misunderstanding, and the betrayal, and the bitterness of death, and the grief of seeing those He most loved "pierced with a sword" because of it. And He bore it on to the bitter end ; "He endured the Cross, despising the shame." And that was the contrast between what was meant to be and what actually happened, and we get accustomed to it, we think it all right hearing about the Cross ; we have heard about that before. I say it was the most disgraceful tragedy

the world has ever seen, and a lasting disgrace to the human race.

The question is, Why was it? why did this happen? why was it allowed to happen? why did He endure the Cross like this to the bitter end? And here shines out the sunshine from behind the awful cloud. He endured it "for the joy that was set before Him." All the time there was something clear before His mind that He was working towards, something like a star that cheered Him on through the night, which made Him forget all about the Crucifixion, which prevented Him feeling so much as He otherwise would have done the better misunderstandings and the ugly stories about Him—something like a beacon of hope, "the joy that was set before Him."

What was that joy? Many people think it was something very different from what I think it really was. I believe the idea in many people's minds is that he was thinking all the time: "Well, it is only for a little time, and then I shall be back out of all this pain, back where there is no pain, to be worshipped by millions of saints and angels; and therefore I can endure this for a few hours on the Cross." Do you really think that was the joy set before Him? He had had that before He came. If that was the thing that cheered Him on, it was precisely what He had when He left His FATHER's throne and came to earth; and therefore, if this was all, this peerless act of glorious self-sacrifice would have been in vain. No! the Saviour of the world had another joy all the time at which He was aiming. I think you may divide it into two or three parts.

(1) The first was the joy of doing His FATHER'S will. "Wist ye not that I must be about My FATHER'S business?" He said that even as a boy. It was a joy to be doing His FATHER'S work. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD!" And the reason that it was such a bitter moment on the Cross when His FATHER'S face was hidden from Him was because it hid His joy for a moment. The first part of His joy was to have come down and through the misrepresentation, through the spitting, through the awful desertion of His friends, through the pain of the Cross, to fulfil perfectly His FATHER'S will. "This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased." That was the first joy that was set before Him; not to go back, and get away from the pain, but to receive the FATHER'S benediction, to have satisfied the FATHER'S heart, to have done His FATHER'S will; that was the first joy that was set before Him, which made Him endure the Cross to the end.

(2) But that was not all. What had He come down here to do? I look at you in the face as if you were in my room, and I say He came down from Heaven to save *you*, and *you*, and *you*, and *you*. It was not only to save those who lived at the time. That was what St. John meant in speaking of "the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world." It was an eternal event that had to happen at a point of time, but it affects all the people who lived before and who live afterwards. And therefore, I say again, He came down to save *you*, and *you*, and *you*: and part of the joy that was set before Him was the joy of saving you. It was the joy of the Good Shepherd Who has the Lamb on His shoulder and carries it

back rejoicing ; the joy of the Good Shepherd in that picture of the Lost Sheep.* See, He is finding the lost sheep, putting His hand down to take it up while it is in a dangerous position. And one of the reasons why you are assembled here by the HOLY SPIRIT—and remember the HOLY SPIRIT is behind all this ; He brought you here—is that you may have this brought home to your hearts. Is it going to be in vain that He died for you ? It is in vain at present if you are one of those who never darken the doors of the church, if you are one of those who never say a prayer, who never think of JESUS CHRIST or His Cross from one week's end to another. Then He has died in vain for you at present. But what will give Him joy now—because He is as much alive as ever, and is with us in spiritual presence—is this : if you will turn over a new leaf, if you will break with the past, if you will say, “ I am the sinner whom JESUS died to save ” ; if you will give up the sin which helped to crucify Him, and live a manly, pure, true, sober, godly life henceforward, then it will not be in vain that He died for you. “ There is joy in the presence of the angels of GOD over one sinner that repenteth,” and not only in the presence of the angels of GOD, but in the heart of JESUS CHRIST. I do pray that it may not be in vain ; I do pray that the message from the Cross which has never reached you before, and which may never reach you again, may not be cast aside. “ JESUS died, He died for me ”—if the HOLY SPIRIT makes you say that, you will be a changed man, if

* This picture was hanging in the church at the time.

that conviction leads on, as it should, to a new life.

(3) And then, if that is done, if we contribute to that joy which was always set before Him, which He was aiming at all the time, then we help Him to get the next joy, and that is the joy of a redeemed humanity. He died, He came here and died to make the world what it might have been, as we saw at the beginning, but for the entrance of sin into the world ; He came to try and make happy human beings because He loves us through it all, in spite of the horrible way in which we treated Him ; He came in love, and in His forgiving way He said : "FATHER, forgive them : they know not what they do." It was part of the joy to turn this poor wayward human race into a redeemed humanity, to see men and women and children the noble beings they might be. We are working in this Mission to help Him to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And when you are converted and turn to a new life, you have to become a worker and try to bring in other people. It is a delightful thing in a ten days' Mission to see the people who were brought in the first night carrying round the lanterns in the procession before the end of the Mission. We are allowed to help Him not only to the glorious joy of seeing individual souls saved, but also to the joy of seeing a redeemed humanity, the Kingdom of GOD on earth. That is what we are working for, or at least ought to be.

What are you doing to produce the Kingdom of GOD ? Who is better for what you have done ? To what are you dedicating your lives, you who do believe that JESUS died for you ? There is some-

thing wrong if every man and woman is not working for the Kingdom of GOD, that JESUS may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Let us wake up from our apathy; look up and say, "He gave Himself for me, I give myself to Thee," and then start working.

(4) Fourthly, I believe that His joy, His immense joy, is to welcome His faithful servants after the life of suffering and the Cross which they have often had to bear on earth. Stephen looked up and saw JESUS standing on the right hand of GOD, springing from His throne, as it were, to welcome His suffering servant. What a joy, as one after another whom He has helped on earth comes up to be received with open arms! "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy LORD." What a joy for Him! "Make to yourselves friends by your use of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, as it certainly will, those friends may receive you with open arms into the everlasting habitation."

Now, what are we going to do about all this? The Mission is almost over, and the waters are, as it were, rushing on towards the crisis, as the waters of Niagara rush quicker and quicker before the awful plunge. Are you going home saying to yourself, "I rather liked the Mission Service; it was something rather out of the ordinary," and do nothing else. If you are not changed by the message of the Cross, you are hardened by it, and when you see in the other world JESUS CHRIST with the marks of the Cross on His hands and His feet, He will remember the message which you had here, and He will know that

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down in that earth-world you heard now, if never before, that He died for you. He appeals to you to-night :

“ This have I done for thee ;
What hast thou done for Me ? ”

What a glorious night it will be, if you turn to Him and have something to show when you meet Him !

“ This have I done for Thee, LORD, because I did believe that Thou didst die for me.”

Secondly, make a resolution never to hound to death, never by misrepresentation, by lying stories, by wicked gossip to hound to death, as they are to-day hounded to death and misery, the faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST in this world. I know that numbers whom GOD has not made sad are made sad by the wicked, lying stories of people about them in a Christian country ; and remember this, that “ Inasmuch as ye do it to the least of these My brethren, ye do it to Me.” He hears what you say, and in hounding them down you hound Him down ; you trample underfoot again the SON of GOD, and put Him to an open shame. Do not do that ; refuse to let your lips pass on the wicked lie, and you are giving a cup of cold water in His name to a disciple, and you will not lose your reward.

Thirdly, endure the cross yourself. Do not mind it, do not mind the splinters running in. A soldier of the Cross should expect to carry the cross too. The cross is not an ornament of gold, but a great, rough, ugly thing with sharp splinters. And therefore, if I am speaking to anyone who has a hard task to struggle on to the end, and sees no hope, then I

say : " For the joy set before you, endure the cross, do not mind it ; stagger on ; it will be worth while when the LORD says : ' Well done, good and faithful servant.' " Bear the lying representation and the misunderstanding, and all the rest of it, because every step you go on bearing that cross, you come closer to your Master. If it is pain, bear the pain for the same reason.

And lastly, make His joy your joy. What are you going to do with your life ? Making money ? What a wretched thing, what a miserable way of spending the precious years of life, simply to make as much money as you can ! Of course, you have to keep your family and to make both ends meet ; that is your duty. But to make the object of your life to become rich or famous is most ridiculous. I do not think there is anyone more miserable than the man or woman who is simply thinking of these things all the time. But have CHRIST's joy, the joy of the Good Shepherd. " How many people can I save ? How many people can I bring back into the fold ? How can I do my FATHER's will perfectly ? How can I leave the world better than I found it when I came into it ? Shall I have friends to receive me into the everlasting habitation ? " That gives a lasting, an increasing joy which the world can neither give nor take away. Thus to-night's message amounts to this : endure the cross, despise the shame, keep the joy ever before you, CHRIST's own joy, and nothing can stop your having " joy in GOD, whatever happens. "

ST. JOHN'S, WALHAM GREEN

WEDNESDAY EVENING

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. I have often come in contact in London with men who declare that there was never a Fall of man, but, on the other hand, that there has been a gradual rise from the brute. What am I to believe?

That is a very popular idea, and a very dangerous one. There is a certain amount of truth in it, and there is a certain amount of truth in evolution altogether, but the idea that there never was a Fall, that sin is an undeveloped form of good, is one of the most dangerous ideas in the world; and I want to say four things about it. I want to answer this question more in detail than some of the others. (1) In the first place, it is absolutely contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Read the Bible carefully, and note what it says about sin. For instance, our LORD JESUS CHRIST said Himself, with regard to the tares sown in the field, "An enemy hath done this"; when He looks down upon the mischief of the world His teaching is not, "Never mind about it; it is an undeveloped form of good," but, "An enemy hath done this"—if you consider this you will see that evil is a principle absolutely opposed to good. When you study St. John's teaching you will learn that sin is lawlessness. If any of you can afford a book such as Dr. Gore's work on "The New Theology and the Old Religion," you ought to read it right through. It deals admirably with the whole subject. But, coming back to this particular

question, I say that the teaching of the Bible is that evil is contrary to good, that sin is lawlessness, breaking the law. Think what our LORD said: "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." If his sin were only an undeveloped form of good, it would be impossible to say that it had been better if he had not been born. Anyhow, it was better for him to be born, for then his evil would have been gradually developed into good. But, if our LORD says, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born," it is perfectly clear that that man had something inside him which was violently opposed to good. (2) The second thing is that it is contrary to what we know of human nature. You know your own children; do you find they are perfect little angels, as we sometimes say half in joke? Do you not find, as a matter of fact, that you have to counteract the evil tendency from the beginning, and teach them to keep their tempers, and so on? The child that is allowed to grow up according to nature is just the child that does not turn out well at all. And if that is true with regard to human nature and our knowledge of the evil within us, and the necessity for fighting it, it is also true of the progress of humanity altogether. I remember reading a sermon thirty years ago by Phillips Brooks, called "The Giant with the Wounded Heel," and it has stuck in my memory all these years. Who is the Giant? Humanity—"It shall bruise thy head." The child born of the woman fatally wounded Satan. Yes, but "Thou shalt bruise his heel." As a matter of fact the progress of humanity is not an unbroken evolution going on without difficulty. It is a slow progress of a giant dragging his bruised leg after him, a giant with a wounded heel. Therefore the idea that there was a Fall, that man misused his free-will, that Satan was allowed to wound his heel, is borne out in the history of humanity. Humanity has progressed, but it is the giant who has dragged his wounded heel after him. (3) Then the last thing I would say is that the reason this false doctrine is so dangerous is because, once men get possessed with the idea that their little weaknesses do

not matter, that they are going to develop without much struggle into good, they will never fight evil as they ought to do.

“ There’s a battle to fight, ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.”

This easy-going, unscriptural idea of sin is very dangerous, and one which we must entirely resist.

2. Can you explain how a Being so omnipotent as GOD could have devised a scheme involving such suffering to His innocent SON ?

A question like that shows a total misconception of the Catholic faith altogether. I have had to explain already that this great plan of Redemption is a loving idea of all the Persons of the HOLY TRINITY ; that GOD the FATHER hated the sin as much as GOD the SON ; that GOD the FATHER loved the sinner as much as GOD the SON ; and that this plan was carried out by the HOLY TRINITY together. GOD the FATHER gave His SON, GOD the SON came—“ Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD !”—and the HOLY GHOST came down to cry “ Abba, FATHER ” in our hearts, and to take of CHRIST and show Him to us. When anyone represents the Persons of the TRINITY as if They were contradictory to one another, he is contradicting the teaching of Christianity. GOD is one GOD, though three Persons in one GOD. The idea of GOD being cruel, and making His innocent SON bear all this, loses sight of the fact that the suffering was a purely voluntary act on the part of the SON.

3. Is it necessary for anyone who wishes to be confirmed to confess to a priest before he can be confirmed ?

Clearly not. However good and useful and helpful confession in such a case may be, no one has a right to make it a condition to the Sacraments. We must lay down, of course, that repentance and confession to GOD are essential,

and may advise that they should be done in a particular way, but no one in the Church of England has a right to lay down that confession in the presence of a priest is necessary. One of our greatest High Church missionaries told me the other day that he absolutely agreed with what I have said, that the voluntariness of confession was the chief value of it.*

4. Next comes a question about signs. I have deprecated looking for signs, or people fixing on a sign—if it rains to-morrow or if something else happens—and saying: “Now, if that happens I shall know that GOD hears my prayer.” I said it seemed a presumptuous thing to do. We have no right to fix on a sign like that; we are not to dictate to GOD how He will answer our prayers. But this writer says:

I am daily praying for a sign in the weekly mail from my son, that there should be some mention in his letter that he has not forgotten his religion in the stress of active life. Is this right?

There is no reason why the mother should not look for a sign in her son's letters. I do not want to make sad one whom GOD has not made sad, but I should think the straightest thing to do would be to ask him in the next letter whether he was going to his Communion. A sign of that kind is not the sign that I was deprecating.

5. I am almost overwhelmed by a physical depression. May we believe at these times that the gloom does not divide us from GOD? May we regard it as any other ache of the body, and bear it in any way for GOD?

Why did JESUS CHRIST go through that awful darkness? “My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” In my sick-visiting to-day someone asked that

* See “How to Repent,” pp. 42-52.

very question. Why, it was for you He specially bore this trial !

“ It went up from the Holy’s lips amid His lost creation,
That of the lost no son should breathe those words of
desolation.”

The very reason that He went through on Good Friday that awful gloom was that you might be able to take your darkness and spiritual depression and share it with Him, and know that you were no more forsaken than He was. It is nothing but a trial ; doubt has been called “ The last trial of the sons of GOD.”

6. I am constantly with a girl who is a Unitarian. She is always trying to persuade me to read books disproving the Divinity of JESUS CHRIST. What ought I to do ?

This question is evidently put in by quite a young person. There is no reason why you should read those books now. In all probability you would not have the knowledge and insight and reading enough to see through the arguments on the other side. Get a thorough training. You might read Liddon’s or Gore’s “ Bampton Lectures.” When you are older and more instructed your faith will be stronger, and there is no reason why you should not then read what books you like on the subject.

7. One who has told many lies all her life, asks if it is a perfectly hopeless task to try and carry out what she understands is the teaching of the Mission, to untell all the lies she has told.

I think this questioner ought to have a talk with someone about her life. Undoubtedly if there is any false impression left on anyone’s mind by her words, she cannot receive forgiveness, unless she does her best to make amends for the lies she has told. If we have taken away someone’s character,

it is still taken away, and we must do what we can to undo the harm.

8. How is it possible for it to be better for anyone to have a millstone about his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea? Surely the person drowned would have reached the "far country where our hearts abide."

The answer is, of course, that our LORD was using a paradox: "It is better to go out of this life altogether and be drowned in the depths of the sea than to do this." You cannot take a strong assertion like that too literally, but I should say myself that it is very unlikely that this presumed person who had cast a stumbling-block in the way of the little ones would be so happy "where our hearts abide." I cannot think of anything more damnable than putting a stumbling-block in the way of those who believe in CHRIST. We cannot think that death would be a happy thing for those who did that if they died in a state of unrepented sin.

9. Is it impossible to renew to repentance those who had once fallen away?

That text has filled with despair many souls. My answer always has been that you must never interpret one passage of Scripture as against another, and therefore that passage must not be interpreted so as to contradict the passage: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as snow." You must take the whole Gospel as it is. I have looked again at the Greek, and I agree with the writer of another letter that there is a rendering which possibly gives rather a different sense. You know the well-known passage in Hebrews vi. 4-8. This is the suggested translation: "It is impossible in the case of those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the gifts of the

HOLY SPIRIT, and tasted the word of GOD and power in the world to come, and fall away, to be again renewing them to repentance whilst they are crucifying the SON of GOD afresh, and putting Him to an open shame." The Greek tense implies "while they are doing it"; when they cease doing this their renewal becomes possible. Whether we accept this interpretation or not, it is perfectly clear no one ought to be deterred from repentance, for the reason which I originally gave.

10. Will sins confessed be brought up again at the Judgment Day?

Certainly not. "I will cast all thy sins behind My back." The burden is cast off, the sins are taken out of the way. We have already spoken of the glory of forgiveness. "I saw the ocean of light and life flow over the ocean of darkness and death," said John Wesley, "and in that I saw the infinite love of GOD." You can spend Easter, if you repent, confess to GOD, and receive His forgiveness, knowing that "all thy sins have I cast into the depths of the sea." You will remember them, but you will remember them as sins forgiven.

XI

ST. JOHN'S, WALHAM GREEN

WEDNESDAY EVENING

HOW TO ENDURE THE CROSS

“If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross, and follow Me.”—ST. MATT. xvi. 24.

MY message on Sunday evening was of Him “Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame,” and we tried to picture together that glorious, noble, sinless loving form, battered and misrepresented, misunderstood, and betrayed, and all for us, bearing everything and enduring everything for the joy that was set before Him; and the joy that was set before Him was not just going back, as it were, out of the pain, as we sometimes think, but the joy of doing His FATHER’S will, the joy of winning you and me, and bringing us back into the fold; the joy of the Good Shepherd; and the joy of looking down and seeing a redeemed humanity, a kingdom of GOD on earth. That was the joy He was working for all the time.

What we have to think over now is what we are going to do as followers of the Crucified. We have discussed together, “How we are to Repent,” “How

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we are to Love GOD more," "How we are to be Forgiven," "How we are to Trust"; now we have to think over, "How am I to endure the Cross?" And we recall the words so familiar, repeated over and over again in the New Testament, "If any man will come after Me, let Him take up his cross, and follow Me." No one can deny the reality of the crosses which have to be borne.

Take first the cross of pain. I have spent the whole of this afternoon in visiting the sick, and I would ask you whether there is no reality in the cross of pain to a young man whom I saw in the Brompton Hospital with consumption, who hardly knows how his wife and children can be kept during his illness, and who, probably, will have to face an early death. I have not been mocking him by saying that if he believed, he would not die. It is cruel to say that. Or take a poor girl I saw to-day who had been lying two years on her back—one who was a most active worker, and longs to be at work again, but who is constantly in great pain. And when you compare your experience with mine, and think over all those whom we know and those for whom we prayed to-day—those going through operations, perhaps at this moment—am I not right in saying that pain is a real cross? Do we get out of the difficulty in the least by pretending that it is not one? I have an excellent little pamphlet here, come over from America, by one very well known in England—Bishop Hall, of Vermont—"Pain and Suffering: their Place in the World." This seems to me to contain sound teaching, much wanted, especially in these days. Bishop Hall says that pain and suffering

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cannot be ignored : they must be faced ; they are too widely prevalent, they make themselves too acutely felt, to be denied. It is foolish to talk of pain as an illusion of the mortal mind ; it is something very real ; and I will own that it makes me feel indignant when I hear of some poor girl, watched by a sister dying of consumption, and weeping because she was told that if she had more faith her sister would not die. If that is not making sad those whom GOD has not made sad, I do not know what is. "Mother says I *think* I have got a pain ; but I *know* I have got a pain," moaned a poor little child. Let us be perfectly frank ; while it is true that the power of mind over matter is very great, let us not exaggerate that perfectly sound truth in such a way as to be untrue to the facts of life. Our friends tossing on their beds of pain have a cross to bear.

So, again, misunderstanding and misrepresentation is a cross. It cuts one to the quick to be betrayed. When we have given our trust, and find it betrayed by the very people whom we thought we could trust, that is a bitter cross. If there are any of you going through it at this time, I would remind you that it is exactly the cross our Saviour bore—the very cross. We cannot choose our crosses ; and if you feel inclined to be bitter about it, and cannot do anything to remove the misunderstanding, remind yourself of what He had to do. He had to endure the Cross, and the misrepresentation, and the misunderstanding, and the absolute betrayal of His private life ; and, when you remember that, you will be able to bear it better. It will take all the bitterness out of it. "I will let the splinters," you will say, "run into me

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from His Cross." But my point is that it *is* a cross, and there are some who are bearing that bitter cross to-day.

Then, again, disappointment is a cross. When someone is just about to drink a cup of happiness, and quite unexpectedly it is dashed from his lips—I have seen that happen over and over again—and perhaps from being well off he suddenly finds himself poor, that is also a cross; it is no good denying it. To have a drunken husband or a wife who is possessed by a demon of jealousy—I merely pick out experiences I have come across during the last few days—is again a terrible cross. As I try, with GOD'S help, to answer the question, "How am I to endure the Cross?" let everyone picture to themselves their own cross and other people's crosses, and admit, before I go a step farther, that I am not dealing with unrealities. The cross is too rough, and comes down upon the shoulders too sharply, and the splinters run into the flesh too much to be scoffed at or laid aside as an unreality or a delusion. It is a bitter cross.

How, then, are we to endure it? Our Saviour says: "If any man will come after Me, let him take up that cross, and follow Me. If he follows Me bearing his cross, he will follow Me at last to My eternal glory." What, then, is the answer?

(1) First, do not be ashamed of praying that your cross may be removed. There is nothing wrong in that—clearly nothing wrong—because JESUS did that Himself. Think of Him in Gethsemane, and listen to His prayer; this is just what He said: "O LORD, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine

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be done." You are not, then, faithless in praying that the pain may pass, that the poverty may pass, that the anxiety may pass, that this bitter misrepresentation may melt away. You are not at all faithless in praying that, so long as you pray it in the spirit of the Master—"If it be possible, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." You are only praying with CHRIST in Gethsemane when you pray that.

(2) Secondly, you are quite right in taking steps, if possible, to have the matter set right—I mean, supposing it is not your fault. Perhaps some careless conduct of yours has led to the misrepresentation. You must not blame other people; see that you yourself alter that. It might be innocent carelessness, but we have to watch as well as pray. So with regard to any cross, or disaster, or pain, or suffering—always try to act up to what Charles Kingsley said in his curt way, when it was proposed to have a day of universal prayer for the cholera: "A day of prayer for the cholera! Yes; but look to your drains." What he meant was that, instead of sitting down under some misfortune and saying it is a cross, we must exercise our intelligence and our mind and work with GOD, and keep the conditions of health, and, as he said, "Look to the drains," and see to the cleanliness of the town. Then we may legitimately pray for the cholera to be taken away. There must be no unreality about the cross; we must use our intelligence as men and women, and see what we can do. We may, by working together, lessen the weight of the cross for ourselves and others.

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(3) Then, when we have said that, as it were, to clear the ground, what if the cross remains? how are we to bear it? (a) Bear it uncomplainingly. After all, even if you have this bitter cross, do not forget, as Mrs. Hamilton King said, it is only in this world you can bear the cross at all; this earth was chosen, as she said, for the star of suffering; in other worlds we may be asked to do something else for CHRIST, but only in this world can we be asked to suffer for Him and with Him. I cannot be said to bear the cross if I never feel a splinter of the cross. St. Paul said, "I bear in my body the marks of the LORD JESUS." There must be some suffering in the short years of probation. We ought not to be so very sorry to be conformed to Him and to what He had to bear here. Therefore I say: "Bear the cross uncomplainingly."

(b) And then I go further and say, bear it joyfully. In a sermon by Phillips Brooks I read years ago he reminds us that the sacrifice of old was offered to the sound of the trumpets with joy, and there ought to be a sort of joy—a real joy—about self-sacrifice in bearing the cross. The pictures of our LORD on the Cross, the earliest representations, were not like later ones; they were of a victorious figure in the prime of life, with no nails through His hands and feet, with an upright head, and a look of joyful self-sacrifice. And that is what we must aim at: we must bear the cross joyfully; "take up" the cross—it makes all the difference—lying down under it is one thing, taking it up is another. Take it up bravely, joyfully, cheerfully, and you will find the cross comparatively easy to bear. There are people who are always complaining about their cross and

feeling it so heavy, and are not asking for strength to bear it. Those who go and take it up as part of their day's work do not find it so heavy, after all.

“Take up thy cross and follow CHRIST,
Nor seek till death to lay it down ;
For only he who bears the cross
May hope to win the glorious crown.”

(c) Thirdly, bear it—and this, I think, is the one lesson we shall remember more than any ; I certainly shall : it is the law of Day by Day again—bear it day by day. Just as we trust day by day, so we are to bear the cross day by day. We have only got to suffer for one day, work for one day, to be maligned one day, to bear poverty one day, at a time, every day bringing us nearer and nearer to the time and place where there is no more suffering, and the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from all faces. You are looking forward to an eternity of happiness. If you are expecting that, it is not so very much to be asked to be in pain for a few hours.

(d) Fourthly, in bearing it, remember what CHRIST says : “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.” “Yoke !” What does that mean ? A yoke means something which has room for two, and the glorious thing about a yoke is that, if we take CHRIST's yoke upon us to bear the burden, He comes under the yoke alongside of us. And, therefore, it is not really we who are bearing the cross at all : He is bearing it with us and for us, and really taking all the force, and strength, and bitterness, and the heaviness of it upon Himself. That is most wonderfully true. You know it is really only those who try to bear the cross by themselves who

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find it so intolerable, but if once they remember that He and they, as it were, carry the burden together, they will find it light. The experience of hundreds of thousands who are now in Paradise is that in this way the cross is comparatively light to carry.

(e) And then if you say : "If we endure the cross, is there a joy set before us, too ? CHRIST, we are told, endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him ; is there a joy set before us ?" Why, of course there is, even on earth. To bear the cross properly brings you the joy of union and communion with your LORD every day. He is never so near to any as to those who are bearing the cross after Him. As Mrs. Hamilton King says :

" But if Himself He come to thee, and stand
Beside thee, gazing down on thee with eyes
That smile and suffer, that will smite thy heart,
With their own pity, to a passionate peace ;
And reach to thee Himself the Holy Cup
(With all its wreathen stems of passion-flowers
And quivering sparkles of the ruby stars),
Pallid and royal, saying, ' Drink with Me,'
Wilt thou refuse ? Nay, not for Paradise !"

That is the joy of union. Then there is, further, the joy of self-mastery. When you press the cross down upon the passions, and the affections, and the lusts, and jealousies, and make the cross do its work, there comes the joy of self-mastery—getting more control of the temper, losing your life and finding it, making the cross, as it were, mortify all that is bad and making the good in the man or woman come out more every day. There is the joy of growing influence. The more we bear the cross and lose our bad self—

crucify the old man with the affections and lusts—the more true strength comes out, the more we influence others, the more we can get a grip of the young men or the girls or children entrusted to us as a teacher. Then there is the joy at last of hearing the approval of JESUS CHRIST upon your life's work. Is it nothing—is it nothing to look forward to the time when, with all our shortcomings and our infirmities, we hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Is it not justifiable to look forward to that very humbly, knowing how unworthy we are? Surely we were meant to look forward to the time when we should lay the cross down, and offer up our work and look up into the face of the One Who has been helping us all the time, and at least hope to hear Him say—"Well done, good and faithful servant!" If that would not be joy, what would be? And then, to meet again those whom we love, to share the sweet society of the noble, and the true, and the blessed, where all jealousy and misunderstanding has passed away, to be with them again!

"O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with GOD be the rest,"

as Browning says. Is that no joy? Surely the joy set before us far outweighs the sorrow, far outweighs the sadness, and the waiting, and the bitterness, and the hardness of the cross. Let us, then, persevere bravely, cheerfully,

"Ever look sunward, and with faces golden,
Speaking to each other softly of a hope";

and the end of it all, if we are only faithful, will be this: "Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD."

XII

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

EASTER DAY

THE POWER OF GOD

"Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of GOD."—2 COR. xiii. 4.

BUT for Easter, it would be possible to construct a strong argument against the moral power of GOD. I say "moral power," because no one could deny His physical power. When, according to astronomers, "every law of Nature requires a continual application of force," the power required to keep the stars in their courses, the planets in their paths, is absolutely beyond calculation. It is no explanation to say that this is done by law. Law is merely the method by which force works; it is clear that behind Nature must be a Living Person of astounding power.

I. No! the argument would be against the moral power of GOD. We know that many big and strong men have no moral power, are not at all masters in their own houses, and are easily outwitted and controlled by men or women of far slighter physical strength. And this would have seemed to have been the case with GOD. "Can GOD, however strong physically" (this would be the argument), "be said

to be Master in His own house, when One Who has been acclaimed by all to be at least the purest, sweetest soul that ever breathed is hounded and hunted out of life by the forces of jealousy, and malignity, and prejudice? "He was crucified through weakness, indeed," it would be urged, "but it was the weakness of GOD." Here was One Who really trusted GOD, Who, in the teeth of all opposition, held fast to Him, Who rejected every temptation to be untrue to Him, even in thought, Who stood up against lying gossip and unscrupulous misrepresentation calmly and bravely to the end—nay! Who went further, Who "endured the Cross, despising the shame," Whose only moment of visible distress was at the hiding of GOD'S face, Who defended GOD'S honour against all comers, and breathed out His soul with calm and loving confidence into what to the last He imagined was His FATHER'S hands. And GOD never gave a sign: He never stirred. Deaf alike to the passionate appeal of the innocent and the insolent triumph of His foes—or, if not deaf, powerless to do anything—He allowed the waters to roll over Him; He let Him sink to the bottom like a stone, and nothing happened, and on His grave "the Syrian stars look down," and over His grave must be written the sad and bitter epitaph: "Crucified through the weakness—the weakness of GOD to save Him."

This would have been the strong and damning indictment. And it is just here that the Easter anthem comes in. With a shout of triumph which fires the blood, and shakes the heavens, and turns weak fishermen into the world's Apostles, and has produced the Christian Church, and dried for two

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thousand years the mourners' tears, there rings on as triumphantly to-day as on the two thousand Easters which have passed, the splendid cry, "Though crucified through weakness, He liveth by the power of GOD." The power of GOD which was just waiting for this to show itself; the power of GOD which so carefully hid itself to allow of the play of man's free-will; the power of GOD which must never be put forward to make men good, lest their goodness be worth nothing—this power of GOD found its unfettered chance on Easter Day, and by that power, without an effort, as the natural thing, JESUS liveth, and cries to an astonished world: "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and, behold! I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death."

II. Nor, as we know now, need it have been as much astonished as it was.

(1) JESUS had always said that He would rise, and, as Canon Robinson points out in his "Studies in the Resurrection"—an excellent book for Easter reading—this is the strongest argument for the fact of the Resurrection to many minds to-day. "Thou wilt not leave His soul in hell; neither shalt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption," would carry little conviction as a prophecy unless it were *such* a soul and *such* a Holy One. We are not asked to believe that an ordinary person rose from the dead, but that JESUS CHRIST rose from the dead, which is a very different thing.

(2) Nor was it really likely that GOD would be without moral power. Conscience is a very powerful factor in the life of mankind, and the GOD of Nature

must be the GOD of conscience. History, again, gives some surprising proofs that the "power behind the thrones" is a strong moral power. "Empires tower, and they are gone," as Keble says; but their fall is almost invariably due to some moral cause. Righteousness has a way, awkward to those who wish to disprove the moral power of GOD, of exalting a nation, and decline of righteousness an equally awkward way of bringing it to an end.

(3) Resurrection, again, in itself is not the incredible thing which it once was thought. A Senior Wrangler, himself now a fervent missionary, enumerates the names of twelve men who have founded or revolutionised some branch of natural science—Newton, Clerk Maxwell, Herschel, Adams, Boyle, Dalton, Darwin, Sir James Simpson (the discoverer of chloroform), and Professor Sidgwick (the geologist). If we add the names of Young (who was mainly instrumental in establishing the Undulatory Theory of Light), Joule (who contributed so largely to prove the Conservation of Energy), and Faraday, our list of sciences is complete. "There are here twelve names, and of these eleven are men whose deep Christian belief has been shown by their writings and their lives"; and of the twelfth—Darwin—Mr. Manley truly says: "I have read nothing in his scientific works *contrary* to Christianity, and on the existence of a Creator he most definitely allies himself with the Christian view."*

But, as he is a doubtful witness, substitute for him Sir George Stokes, and you have twelve princes of

* "The Views of Modern Science," by Rev. G. T. Manley.
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science fervent believers in the Resurrection. Could there be a more conclusive proof that there is nothing in exact science to contradict this outcome of the moral power of GOD?

(4) But it may be said that these are the beliefs of the old-fashioned men of science, and that more modern men would hold a different view. Listen, then, to Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Sir Alfred Wallace; they declare that they have verified by repeated experiment the fact that ponderable bodies can be moved without physical contact by some hitherto unrecognised force which was brought into play by the action of the human will. "If of the human will," is the obvious commentary, "why not the Divine Will, too?"

"The philosopher," says a recent writer, "who antecedently to experience should venture to pronounce the word 'impossible,' even in the region of pure mathematics, would write himself belated"; and Sir Oliver Lodge goes further, and says: "Christianity, both by its doctrines and its ceremonies, rightly emphasises the material aspect of existence. . . . Its belief in some sort of bodily resurrection is based on the idea that every real spiritual existence must have a double aspect—not spiritual alone, nor physical alone, but in some way both. Such an opinion," he adds, "is by no means out of harmony with science."*

It is worth while just dwelling on these sayings for a moment to show how "out of date" is the cheap sneer against the Resurrection sometimes uttered in

* Canon Robinson's "Studies in the Resurrection," pp. 97, 98.

the workshop or the office; how threadbare the arguments of the secularist lecturer 1 and to hearten the earnest but timid Christian to join without fear at Easter with his mind and intelligence, as well as with his heart, in the shout of triumph: "Though crucified through weakness, He liveth by the power of GOD."

III. GOD, then, is good: He is loving, He is forgiving, He is sacrificing, He exercises individual care for all, and when He can put it forth without defeating His own object in creation, He shows Himself a GOD of invincible power and might.

Why should we not, then, have "Joy in GOD—whatever happens"?

Do temporary disappointments dishearten us? But the GOD of Easter is strong enough to bring everything right in time.

Is the apparent triumph of selfishness, lying, and greed terribly depressing to the faith? But GOD is only biding His time, and He will sweep them aside as easily as all His enemies were swept aside on Easter Day; and we shall sing again: "Sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea."

Is the apparent weakness of the good and innocent distressing to the last degree? Does it wring the heart to think of those who seem crucified through weakness in this great city night after night? But the vindication is coming. "Shall not GOD avenge His own elect? I tell you He will avenge them speedily"; and when it comes, the vindication will be as complete and crushing as it was on the first Easter Day.

The Power of God

“Wherefore,” as one of the great Easter lessons so splendidly concludes, “be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the LORD; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD.” “There never shall be one lost good,” because “CHRIST has risen.” “No work begun can ever pause for death.” Whatever may be the appearance now, it is as certain as that the sun is in the heavens that the GOD by whose power JESUS liveth, at the right time and in the right way, if only we are faithful, will be seen with His own right hand and His holy arm to have gotten to Himself the victory.

ADDRESSES TO MEN ONLY

I

ALL SAINTS', ACTON

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

TO MEN ONLY

THE SIX LAWS OF GOD'S FAMILY

"Be ye therefore followers [imitators] of GOD as dear children."—EPH. v. 1.

THE first message of the Mission was this : that the great reality of the world, and the great reality to every one of us (much more real than our dearest friend, much more real than anything we talk about day after day during the week, or read in the papers), is that close to us is a loving Person : that this Person, Whom we call GOD, is perfectly good, perfectly loving, knows us all, every one by name, as if there were not another person in the world ; knows us individually—knows all our children, if we have any, by name. He is forgiving, and therefore the worst man has got a chance. I should not dare to take a Mission if I did not believe in the Atonement of the SON of GOD, forgiving, self-sacrificing, always living a life, not, as sometimes we are apt to think, of contented ease, but of daily self-sacrifice, which was shown above all when He poured out His life on the Cross—self-sacrificing,

patiently provident, having undertaken to see us through all our troubles, day after day, and of perfectly invincible power. That was the sixfold message.* He hid His power, mark you, because if He did not hide it, He would force everyone to be good against his will, and produce a worthless goodness; but He showed it on Easter Day, when, by the touch of His finger, He rolled back Death, and JESUS rose from the dead. He showed His invincible power when He willed to put it forth.

Now, we have got to take that for granted. I have tried to prove it all already. I am asking you now to believe this by the exercise of your imagination; and my subject now is: If that is true, what is your response, and what has my response got to be?

And, of course, it has got to be, first, a perfectly willing response. I am going to draw out the points in it, but before we look at the six family laws I want to say that this response must be perfectly cheerful and willing. I do not believe in trying to frighten people by hell-fire into being good. Even if we could do so, it would be a worthless goodness. There is a tragic truth about all that dark side; if you are not in the light, you are in the shadow, and you are only deceiving people if you do not paint sometimes how dark the shadow is. As we have seen, GOD is the GOD of hell as well as of Heaven. The great light is the Gospel. Outside the light is the shadow. Therefore there is a shadow; but GOD cares nothing about a response which is not going to be a perfectly willing response. I am going to try and persuade you on GOD'S behalf this afternoon. Then your response

* See the first address at St. John's, Ealing (p. 3).

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must be one that goes right through to the bottom of the character. We have quite enough lip-service. We have to make a response which, when it is made, changes the man, changes the home, changes him in business, changes him right through. That is the only change worth having, and it must be one which makes our heart "a copy, LORD, of Thine," to use the words of the hymn we have just sung. In other words, as this Almighty FATHER looks down upon His children, we must be able to show Him some sort of reflection of Him. You love people to come in and see how like your child is to you. If you are good fathers, one of your greatest happinesses in life is to watch the children growing up to be good. If you are not good yourselves, you want them to be better, and have a chance to be a credit to you. Do not you see, as GOD looks down on His children on earth, He wants to see them all turning their hearts to Him, and in their characters becoming good and loving and true as He is? "Be ye therefore imitators of GOD as dear children"; that is what we must make true for us all.

Now, what are the six family laws—those laws of GOD'S family which, if we kept them, would give GOD the satisfaction of His heart, and would enable Him to see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied, because as He looked down He would see His own reflection in His children? Nothing can be more important than to find out what these six laws of the family are, and, please GOD, to keep them.

(1) As I look round London to-day there is nothing in the world to which I more attribute the misery that I see (where I do see misery in London) than to the

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breach of the *law of perfect purity*. It is not only the poor girls whom we have to try to rescue off our streets. I see it quite as much in the poor, miserable men whom I find in my ministry in London, or who are brought to me ; they are quite as wretched and miserable at the bottom of their souls when they are living the bad life of which they are ashamed. Now, what do men say—you know better than I do ; I only know indirectly through what the lads and men tell me—but what do men say in the laundries round here, and in the offices, and in the workshops, about this ? I know they say sometimes, “ Oh, everybody does this ! ” or they say, “ It is an impossible law to keep, human nature being what it is ” ; or they say, “ It does not do any harm.” What, now, I have got to persuade you—and it is the deepest conviction of my heart—is that to keep this law of purity is first of all commanded by GOD, as plainly as anything can be. Secondly, so far from being impossible, it is not even difficult, if you go the right way about it. And, thirdly, the keeping of it secures a happy life, and the breach of it ends in a miserable life.

First, did GOD command it ? It would almost seem waste of time to refer to the untruth that He did not, if I did not know that such untruth was constantly repeated from lip to lip. What, otherwise, is the meaning of all that is said about fornication in the Bible—“ No fornicator shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven ”—or of the blessing on “ the pure in heart,” or of the denunciation of those who mislead others and put a stumbling-block in their way ? It is as plain as possible that

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purity is the command of our FATHER, Who is perfect Light, and in Whom is no darkness at all, Who sent His SON down to live a perfectly pure life in a human body; and I would appeal to those of you who have kept the law of purity, who have pure homes, and perhaps pure daughters growing up around you, or wives whom you love passionately, and are ashamed that they should hear bad things, I appeal to you whether GOD is not justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged. Was not that happy marriage worth waiting for? You had a struggle, but you waited for the girl you loved. Christian marriage is a perfectly pure thing, and you have now justified GOD by keeping the law of purity. I ask those who may be at this moment unfaithful in some way to their marriage vow if they are not at the bottom of their hearts most miserable—ashamed of the secret being discovered, ashamed of praying, ashamed of its being known? I appeal to the young men here—I hope athletic, and fond of exercises and games, and living all a young man's happy life, enjoying its innocent pleasures, but always keeping yourselves from the deadly pleasure of immorality—are you not merry-hearted, looking the world in the face, compared to the brother, if there be such, alongside of you, who, either by himself or with others, is breaking GOD'S law of purity? The thing is as clear as anything can be; you see it everywhere in human life: GOD knew what He was doing when He gave us the law of purity. There is nothing sinful in the body at all. All the instincts and passions of the body are designed for certain purposes, and we are given self-control over them. The animals are controlled

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in other ways ; we have self-control, and where it is exercised continually the body will obey the spirit with increasing ease as life goes on. GOD has given laws to His children, which when obeyed bring happiness, and when disobeyed bring misery. Am I speaking to some who are trembling in the balance, who are just listening in the workshop to the devil's lies, that have been told from the foundation of the world, that it is manly to break and impossible to keep this law—who are just wavering ? I say it is GOD Who has brought you into this church, so that you should hear in time that those companions of yours are lying, and that this is GOD'S truth for you : “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see GOD.” “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD, or who shall rise up in His holy place ? Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart.” “My strength is as the strength of ten,” said the knight, “because my heart is pure.” And if there are some who, like one or two who have been to see me already during this Mission, who have been led away by those lies, who have stained their manhood, who are miserable and wretched, I say it is not too late to pause before you drift into becoming an ungoverned animal, and to return to the self-controlled manhood which you were meant to have.

(2) We come to the second law. You say : “Well, Bishop, I am sure you believe what you are saying, but that standard is ‘too high for mortal man beneath the sky.’ You don't know what we young men have to hear where we work, especially upon that one subject ; you don't know how hard it is

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to keep our thoughts clean, and to keep our actions straight." "You don't know how hard it is," a young man said to me once, "to say 'No, no, no!' every night of one's life." Yes; it would be impossible but for one thing. The second law goes along with the first. And what is the second law of GOD? Absolute dependence on GOD every day and night. I believe that some men think it almost unmanly to talk about being dependent upon GOD. I heard of a lad once who said, quite honestly: "I always say my prayers at night, because, of course, when I go to sleep I can't take care of myself; but I never say them in the morning, because a great strong boy like me ought to be able to look after himself in the daytime." He was saying straight out what is at the bottom, I believe, of a good many people's minds when they say: "I cannot be troubled about prayer and so on. It is all very well for the clergy or my pious friend round the corner, but it is not for an ordinary man like me." Now, I want you to listen to me about this, though you never hear it said to you so straight again. You are nothing without GOD—nothing at all. I mean you cannot even breathe without GOD; you cannot live five minutes without GOD. It is too late to set up as being an independent person. GOD'S breath, as it were, goes forth, and we are made; when He withdraws the breath, we shrivel away—we are nothing. Therefore—quite apart from what I am going to say about the spiritual world, and strength and grace to resist temptation and keep the law of purity—you are physically nothing without GOD. I remember one day in Victoria Park a

man who was standing at one of the meetings, wishing to encourage me, said, "Well, Mr. Ingram, I vote there is a GOD," and he held up his hand; and they all voted round. There was a certain amount of humour about it, because not one of them had the breath to speak without GOD. Here we are a certain number of days upon earth—perhaps a hundred or five hundred or a thousand days, but a certain number of days—and each one of those days we are absolutely dependent upon GOD the whole time, and were meant to be so. You watch a man, you see his hands and head and so on, and you hear what he says, but all the time it is GOD Who is using him, working through and speaking through him. JESUS CHRIST said as plainly as possible, "Without Me ye can do nothing"; and if you imagine that to be absolutely dependent upon GOD through JESUS CHRIST is unmanly, you are making a mistake. Take a man in your own circle, a man who is doing a man's work, a man who can stand up by himself, and is always ready to do a good turn to his mate—that is the man, you will find, who is dependent upon GOD all day. "The thing works"—men have a way of saying this—"the thing works!" I say on the testimony of the world, "It works." Why did Havelock go to the prayer-meeting when he wanted volunteers for a forlorn hope? Because those men had a strength not their own. And if any of you have been breaking the law of purity, or any other law, and you ask yourself how you came to break it, the reason is you have broken first the second law of GOD'S Kingdom—absolute dependence upon GOD. "Without Me ye can do nothing." What seemed to you

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the useless part of life was the most important part, and you have got to come back to your prayers and your church and your Communion if you are going to be a strong man. Whether you believe it or not, that is the truest word you ever heard. You are not likely to be able to be a perfectly unselfish husband at home by yourself. You are not likely to be able to be a pure, self-controlled young man, with all the temptations of London around you, by yourself. But GOD says: "My strength is made perfect in weakness," and the glorious truth from Heaven is this: that every one of you can do that in the strength of GOD. The splendid thing is that here is the waiting, patient GOD, waiting for His sons to come back to Him. You might have thought that when a man had given up prayer for a year, or perhaps even ten years—and I found one man who had given it up for forty years—you might have thought GOD would have given him up; but the grand thing about our GOD is this: He will not give up His sons. If a single voice does not sound in praise, He misses it. And therefore my second word to you is this: there is still a chance for you to obey again the second law of the kingdom, the second family law, absolute dependence upon a strong and loving GOD. Try in His strength to keep that law of purity. Try to keep away from the drink. Try to keep your temper at home, and do not lay the blame on someone else, as is very often done. See if you are not to blame yourself. Go home and start now; it is your fault, more likely than not, and in the grace and strength of GOD start from to-day, depending for aid daily. Go every Sunday to church, come and be

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confirmed, take the Holy Communion, and be in the closest communion of all with GOD. He is waiting for you. Have you ever thought how hard GOD works? JESUS CHRIST says: "My FATHER worketh even up till now, and I work." I believe that one of the reasons we do not sometimes appreciate GOD, or think of Him with the sort of adoration and worship which we often really have for some great man whom we love and admire, is because we do not think of GOD as always working and sacrificing Himself for the good of His children. See what it is to keep the laws of Nature going. Every law of Nature requires a continual application of Force, and there are twenty million blazing suns under the control of GOD'S hand every day. Think what He is doing in working out His plan in the history of the world. Think what He is doing with every individual person. Mind you, we have the whole of GOD listening to us when we are praying, not a little bit of GOD; the whole of GOD'S attention—He being infinite—is centred upon us when we kneel down and pray. And there is waiting for you all this Mission, the whole of GOD'S love and power. And there are not two gods. Some people seem to imagine that there are two gods, one called GOD and the other called the devil. The devil is merely a created spirit. There is only one GOD, and those who hold on to the one GOD receive such power that the devil has not the slightest power over them. It is only because we do not fill ourselves with the power of GOD that we allow Satan to have what power he has over us.

(3) I come then to my third law, the Law of Work. We belong to a working GOD, and we have

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got to work. You say: "Work, Bishop! Why, I work from morning to night! Sunday is my only free time." Yes; all that work is work for GOD, if it is consecrated.

"Who sweeps a room as for Thy law,
Makes that and the action fine." *

We do not have two lives; all life may be work for GOD; we must be working from morning to night for GOD. Of course, you must be working for your family, but such work is GOD'S work if it is consecrated to Him, and your life is lived out in that spirit. But be honest. Is there nothing else you could do for GOD besides the work by which you earn your daily bread? Have you not got an hour in the week which you can use for GOD? Do you believe that GOD came down from Heaven and died that death? Then surely there is some time available besides the time you give to your work in which you may make some return. There is more time than that. The forty thousand men who have joined the Church of England Men's Society know there is more time than that. What is it, then, you can do for GOD? That is the third law, and you have got to keep it—the law of work. As I came down here from London I got out of the motor in order to see the Church Lads' Brigade of Acton march past to Church Parade. I did it to encourage them. What a field of work there is for officers in that brigade! Or when I go to Hackney Church, and want to hold a Mission Service there, I find two thousand men gathered there by the Church of England

* George Herbert.

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Men's Society. The men of that Society, I have no doubt, have worked up this service to-day. How have people been brought to GOD ? Not by Bishops or clergy—they have done their best—but by one man bringing his brother along, by Andrew bringing Peter. There is work to be done, and what influence you have got you have got to use for GOD by bringing in your brother, by seeing that the boys in your home are going right, or warning them if they are going wrong ; by encouraging your children and finding out what they have learnt at school, and urging them to learn more ; by warning your little boys from getting into bad ways—in all these ways you can work from morning to night for GOD. And the point is that unless you are doing it you are not obeying GOD'S law ; He is disappointed. I was once speaking to a young officer of our Church Lads' Brigade, under the stars down at the camp, and I asked him when he first began to believe in GOD and prayer ; and he said : " As soon as I became an officer of the Church Lads' Brigade, it made the whole thing more real to me." And there is not the slightest doubt that, if there is one thing more than another which would make any lad or man really believe in GOD, it is working for GOD. " Work, work, work, while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work," at any rate, on earth. He may work afterwards, perhaps, in Heaven. Let this Men's Service be a great spring in the whole work of Acton. If these five or six hundred men begin to work for GOD, we would soon turn Acton into a Kingdom of GOD.

(4) Fourthly, there is what we call the Law of

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Witness. All GOD'S created things witness to Him. Ask yourselves what the stars are doing on a dark night. They are witnessing, lighting up a little of the world's dark, telling the world that soon it will see the sun ; they are bearing their witness. There are no better witnesses than the children of London. They come from their Bands of Hope and their Sunday-schools. And what is a man alive for but to give the best witness of GOD he can ? When he does give his witness he gives a better and stronger witness than anyone. And therefore I say you are not obeying GOD'S law, but are breaking it, unless, as He looks down upon you, He finds you acting as a faithful witness. Stand firm, whatever happens. Never mind the silly laugh ; think of the ten million angels looking down upon you. Never mind public opinion ; think of the public opinion of a hundred million of people who have lived and died and have passed away. By far the larger part of the Church is in Heaven already ; what is the silly laugh of some ignorant friend compared with that ?

(5) Fifthly, we have what is often forgotten—the Law of Correspondence. What does that mean ? We have always got to be corresponding with the leadings of GOD. We are told in the Acts of the Apostles that the SPIRIT of the LORD caught away Philip. Why ? Because Philip was ready to go ; he was waiting for the leading of the SPIRIT. Again, we are told that GOD gives “ grace for grace ” ; it means that we are given grace for the grace which we have received and used. We must remember, then, that “ as many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they

are the sons of GOD." "Led by the SPIRIT"—we meditated on that in the North London Mission, when we had a Mission of the SPIRIT. What is the SPIRIT leading you to do ? Something, I am perfectly certain. Is it leading you to give up a bad habit, to come out and do some work for the Church, to be better tempered at home, to come to church every Sunday, to come and be confirmed ? For GOD'S sake, do not refuse the leading of the SPIRIT ; it is an awful thing to do. "As many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the sons of GOD." Be ready, and He will lead you on, and make you, who have not prayed at all for months, a strong religious character, and you will look back on this moment with thanksgiving for the rest of your life. Being led by the SPIRIT, you will be led on and on until GOD alone knows what you may not reach ; you will reach the throne of GOD at last. Correspondence with the leading of the SPIRIT and obedience to His voice is the fifth mark of the sons of GOD.

(6) Then, lastly, there is the Law of Day by Day. I speak to you as if you are strong and happy, but perhaps some have very sorrowful hearts to-day. Some may be in trouble—the wife ill at home ; a poor little child hanging between life and death ; real, wearing worry ; want, perhaps, also staring you in the face. Well, the great strong, powerful, loving GOD has undertaken to see you through day by day, one day at a time ; and if you want to have calm and quiet and peace in your life, obey the law of Day by Day, take one day at a time, and GOD will see you through.

Now you have it all. The sermon is done, but it

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has also got to be done. "Is the sermon done?" asked someone as a congregation was coming out of church. "The sermon is preached," was the answer, "but it has got to be *done*!" Now, are we going to do it? We will all try together. I am not preaching at you; I am talking to myself the whole time. We are all men before GOD here to-day, with the same chances, with the same cares, with the same hopes; we are all on the same level. Let us try to obey the six laws of the family. Let us recall to our minds how beautiful the character of GOD was shown in the face of JESUS CHRIST, and let us try and make our great response. The law of purity to begin with, the law of dependence, the law of work, the law of witness, the law of correspondence, and the law of day by day. If we can be determined to live that life, and obey in those six ways the will of GOD, nothing can stop us from having the joy of GOD which the world can neither give nor take away.

II

CHISWICK PARISH CHURCH

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

CONVERSION

“Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”—ST. MATT. xviii. 3.

THE message of this Mission is “Joy in God, whatever happens;” and my subject now is “Conversion the only path to joy.” I want to leave every home in Chiswick full of that happiness which was meant to dwell there. To be a Christian was meant to be the most joyful thing in the world. Every Christian home, either in prosperity or adversity, was meant to be full of the joy which nothing whatever can take away. The reason I have chosen this subject is because Conversion is the only path to joy. And I want at once to get rid of what I know to be a good many misunderstandings, and even prejudices, about conversion. I have not lived for nine years among working men, spending every evening with them, without knowing something of the things they say to one another, and some of the ideas which are in their minds; and I know perfectly well that a man often says something like this: “Well, all I know is that there is a man who calls himself converted in

our place, and I do not see much difference in his life. He talks a great deal about it, but I don't see much change in his life." Or another says: "Well, all I can say is, the man in our shop who is converted is the most disagreeable man I have ever met." And another says—and all these have been brought up to me time after time—"I don't understand about conversion being born again." A man who was brought up a Churchman, who imagines that conversion is the same as what is called being born again, who reads in his Prayer-Book about being born again, does not see the connection between conversion and the grace which he believes he received in his baptism. I want to remove these prejudices and misunderstandings before we come to what conversion really is.

Let us admit at once that there are plenty of humbugs, and there is plenty of humbug, connected with religion. There is nothing in the world that I am keener about myself, as I go among men of London, than that they should feel that religion is a great reality; and I will honestly admit that there is often unreality in religion, and that our unreal Christians are the greatest curse we have got. We must pray that they may be converted to a real Christianity. I remember hearing that some young men in America pointed to a man who was most regular at his church or chapel, and said: "There is the founder of our Atheists' Club." And the stranger said with surprise: "Why, how is that? I thought he was the most religious man in the place." "So he is supposed to be, but just because we young men know that he is a humbug, we do not have anything to do with religion at all, and we founded this

Atheists' Club." Now, for GOD'S sake, let us prevent anything like that happening about our lives. It is an awful thing, when a young man is practically in the balance as to being religious or not, for him to see some older man who poses as being religious not straight in his business, or untrustworthy in some other way. He is likely to be altogether thrown off his religion.

Or, again, I will freely admit that very often men who are converted from perhaps an immoral life are not so transformed by the grace of GOD that they are attractive. In East London some of my greatest difficulties were over men who had come out for GOD in a sense, but who had so little tact in the way they witnessed for Christianity that they used to put the whole shop or warehouse against Christianity by the sort of priggishness and spiritual conceit with which they behaved. I remember one man particularly. I said to him once : " Dear brother, I know your meaning is right, but do remember that in witnessing "—he had been turned out of about six workshops—" you must have a little tact and common sense in what you do. Pray to be guided and to have spiritual tact." And he said : " Ah, that is just what the devil told me at the time." That will just show you the difficulty. I know perfectly well, in speaking about conversion to men who are probably working in some great factory or office, that there is a great deal of prejudice against conversion.

As to the Churchman who is puzzled by the talk about being born again and its connection with conversion, he will find that it is absolutely unjustifiable by the history of theology or the Bible

to speak about being "born again" as if it were the same as being "converted." Let me show you what I mean. You take a child from the streets of Whitechapel, and you put that child in the London Hospital. Now that child is in a state of salvation ; it is in a state in which it may be healed : there are doctors, and nurses, and there is medicine ; but that child may die in the best hospital in the world. You put it in a state of tremendous privilege, and within the reach of healing. Now, we are born again in our baptism just as unconsciously as we were unconscious when we were born ; we are taken at our baptism, as it were, out of the streets of the world, and placed in a great hospital for sick souls, where we may be healed and saved, and are therefore, as the Catechism says, "in a state of salvation." But the Church never teaches that Baptism by itself will save us whatever our after-life may be. No ; we are put, as I hope the great majority of you have been put as children, into a state of salvation, into the hospital for sick souls built by JESUS CHRIST Himself. But we have got to take the medicine, to obey the great Physician, JESUS CHRIST Himself, as He works through His Church, and to take advantage of all the healing influences of that great hospital, or our soul cannot be saved at the last. And therefore let us avoid any more confusion between being born again and conversion. What some Christians call being born again we call in the Church being converted ; and that moment is when the soul, given this new chance in its baptism, consciously avails itself of it, as I shall show you in a moment. Very often there is a definite time of awakening, when the unconscious

soul wakes to conscious life and gets its first glimpse of GOD.

Leaving, then, these misunderstandings about conversion, what is conversion? Is it an unnatural thing? Am I asking you to work yourselves up into some exaggerated state of mind which we call conversion? Nothing of the kind. Conversion is simply turning to GOD; it is simply turning to Him as the sunflower turns to the sun, as the good child turns to the love and trust of its father. I venture to say that some of you have got little sons of your own whom you most dearly love, or perhaps some little daughter who holds on to your hand for a Sunday afternoon walk. Now, our attitude towards GOD ought to be just the trustful attitude which that child has towards you, or which a good wife has towards a good husband. This word "conversion," which has been so much misunderstood, and has excited so much prejudice, means simply turning. And GOD'S message to you men is this: "Except ye be turned and become like little children, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of GOD."

(1) Now, when we have grasped this, the next point to be clear about is that it is possible for a man to be all his life what he was meant to be, from the time when as a little child he was brought to his baptism—he may be all his life converted. The idea that there is a certain dreary round of sin through which we have all got to go is a most miserable picture of the Christian life. This idea no doubt underlay a certain man's statement to me. I had explained to him the parable of the Good Shepherd. "Oh yes, I understand it," he said: "GOD likes to forgive a good big sinner." We have got all wrong in

our Mission work if that is what we lead people to imagine. No ; the idea for you when you were sent into the world was this : that you should be received into CHRIST's holy Church, which was waiting for you ; that you should be, from the time of your baptism, perhaps, like one of your children, who seems to have been born good, and who goes steadily on, who loves his prayers, his Bible, his Sunday-school. He has his faults, no doubt, but as he struggles against them he goes steadily on, as the poet says, " His days bound each to each by natural piety." Then, at about thirteen or fourteen, or a little older, perhaps, the young soul is meant to be expanding, like the flower that is turned to the sun expands in the warmth and power of the sun ; and down into the opening soul at Confirmation was to come the falling of the HOLY GHOST—another gift of strength as the young soul turns to GOD—and then he was meant to come and feed at the Holy Communion, and receive more grace and strength, expanding in power, growing in grace, becoming more and more useful to mankind, getting a greater grip on Heaven, with his face always turned upwards ; and at last, when death comes, he was meant, without having swerved at all, to be steadily turned to GOD, still drinking in great heartfuls of grace and life and strength, and transplanted after death into the sunny Paradise where he should go on living under the same GOD, getting better and better for ever.

Now, that is the picture of what you and I were meant to be, and if you know someone who is very like that, don't make him sad by asking him : " When were you converted ? Can you name the

day and the hour when you were converted ?” If he cannot tell you, do not look at him as if you thought him unconverted. If you do that, you will make a soul sad whom GOD has not made sad. The young man or woman of whom I speak has been converted and turned from the very beginning of his or her days, and has been carrying out to the best of his or her power GOD’S will. There may be some of you like that, who, in spite of follies and infirmities, never remember the time when you did not try your best to love GOD. I say, thank GOD to-day that He gave you that great gift. Do not be proud about it, but be thankful for it, and let no criticism of others rob you of what you have a right to—the bloom of joy which the world can neither give nor take away. You ought to be happy. It is by GOD’S grace that you have been kept as steady as you have been, and you ought to utter at the Mission a deep and humble note of thanks. “There,” said an old saint, “goes John Bradford, but for the grace of GOD,” when he saw a criminal led to the gallows.

(2) But many will say : “Alas ! Bishop, that is not the case with me.” I said that we were met here for work, and not just to preach to one another. Does that person that I have described represent the man that you are ? I do not know. If we could have a talk one by one with one another, we might perhaps help each other more ; but we cannot do that. Does that good boy, going on steadily from strength to strength, always turned towards his GOD, represent you ? “No, Bishop,” perhaps you say, “frankly it does not. I went to Sunday-school and to church when I was a boy, but I thought I was too old when

I became about thirteen, and I went to a bad shop, or I went to a bad school, and I broke off then. As a matter of fact, it is a good many years since I have regularly said my prayers at all, and, if I was quite frank about it, there are wrong things in my life ; but I have not had the courage to say anything about them. I know perfectly well that, so far from having any joy in GOD, I have done this and that, and I have turned myself away from GOD, and I suppose GOD has turned Himself away from me, because religion has been very unreal to me for many years past." Now, am I describing anyone among you like that ? If I am, I have got a message for you, and my message is this : There is not the slightest reason why all that should not cease from to-day. I have already said that it is unfair to go up to a man and ask him to give the date and place of his conversion, because the man may be like the one I have described. But, if you are like this second man, this very afternoon may be the time and place of your conversion. And GOD has brought you—Heaven knows by what indirect means—to church to speak to you directly, and to say : " Except ye turn, turn round again, to what you were meant to be—not turn round into some exaggerated distortion of a man ; turn round to be a man, the man you were meant to be—unless you are like that, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." You are, perhaps, getting on in life, and now this is your chance.

Now, supposing there is one among you who feels like that, what is he to do ? We must be practical. You must not go away and say : " We heard an exhortation to conversion, but we were not told what

we were to do." What I say to you I say to myself. If I am to keep turned, there are four things I have got to do : I have got to turn four things into the sunshine of GOD'S light—a perfectly practical thing.

(a) I have got to turn my *memory* round into the light. You know it does not follow, because you have forgotten what you did as a boy or a young man, that you are forgiven for it. It does not follow—in fact, it is certain—that GOD has not forgotten. And you remember that one of the most awful things in the parable of Dives and Lazarus is that the soul of the rich man—who had not done anything very bad, as far as we know, but had simply ignored his poor brother, had taken no notice of him—was told to "Remember." It was said to him, "Son, remember." I often think how touching is the passage in the "Dream of Gerontius" which describes the entrance of the spirit into the other world, and the first feeling when it had passed through the gate of death into the other world :

"How still it is !

I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my beating pulse, nor fluttering breath ;
Nor does one moment differ from the next."

"How still it is !" And it is an awful thing to think that "Son, remember," may come at that time when we cannot undo one thing which has been done on earth, when we are in that still place and we have the memory of the past, and we are able to make no sort of amends or alteration in the whole of our earth life. That has not come yet to us, and if I say

on behalf of GOD to you, "Son, remember; turn your memory into the light now," thank GOD it is not too late! It is not too late to be forgiven for the things of the past; it is not too late to alter and make amends for the things of the past. Start a completely new life from this afternoon. But if you have done this already, do not morbidly pry into the past again; there is nothing worse than that. If you have faced it all and been forgiven, stand on the rock of your salvation and trust GOD. Do not do it all over again; that would be utterly wrong. But if you have not yet done this, then turn your memory towards GOD now; think over what you did as a boy or a young man; face the past, write it down, write down by yourself what is wrong, and tell it out to GOD. And if you cannot get peace by yourself, then go and ask some brother, and best of all one of GOD'S priests, to help you. You must be at peace with GOD. You must not only be forgiven, but you must have assurance of forgiveness.

(b) Then turn the *conscience*. What is your business life? What is your home life? I do not know. Are you a considerate, loving husband? Are you a father with children who look upon you as a credit to them, and love to follow you? Is the example that you set your children just what you would like to remember in the other world?—Heaven knows how quickly you will go there. Is your conscience clear about your home life, your private life, your business life? If not, turn it to GOD: it is a practical thing; let Him look at it. In my experience it is extraordinary how much self-deception the human race is capable of. We keep a little bit of our conscience

tucked away, and we bring out the rest and show it as if it were all. Like Ananias, we have not told the whole truth. A little bit of our life is kept back and not shown. We think that is going to be hidden, and no one will know about it. We parade all we can show with a good conscience. This is only half conversion. It brings no joy, no spring, no happiness. I ask you to turn your whole conscience, every bit of it, your whole life, to GOD.

(c) Then your *heart*. Nothing more really decides the sort of man you are than the true answer to this question, What do I really want to be? What am I aiming at being? What is my ideal? If I knew you one by one, and knew what you were aiming at, what you love, I should know your character. What we aim at being—that is the important thing. What is your heart given to? There are some men with one idea, and that is making money. I do not say that is at all likely to be the case with you. You have, of course, to keep your families. Another idea is to get on, and everyone can sympathise to a certain extent with that. Perhaps your idea is to make a name for yourself by some invention, or to be looked upon as a very witty man in the club, or as a man who is sought after in the society in which you live. Well, you will very likely get what you want; that is the extraordinary thing about it. When a man sets his heart on something, he mostly gets it. But what a wretched thing to get! What a wretched thing to set the heart on—a mere temporary thing like that! “Verily,” it was said with scathing irony, “they have their reward.” And a precious poor reward it is. But what you have to do and what I have to do—I

am preaching to myself, I assure you, as well as to you—is to turn our hearts to the GOD Who says to each, “My son, give Me thine heart.” Be set upon being a good man; really love to be a good man; let everything go—prosperity in business and everything—if you cannot be a good man. This is really giving your heart to GOD indeed.

(d) Fourthly, turn your *will*. You know, St. Paul was not converted when the light struck him down to the earth, but he was converted when he looked up and said: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” That was the moment of his conversion; and the moment when you will be converted, when you will have turned, is when, on your knees, looking up to your GOD, you say, not, “What am I feeling like? Am I feeling right?” but, “What wilt Thou have me to do? Here in London, here in Chiswick, what wilt Thou have me to do different from what I am doing now? What bit of work shall I take up for the Church? What shall I alter in my business or my home life? Cannot I pray more regularly, or come to church more regularly? Cannot I come and be confirmed?” And when you have given your will to GOD you are a converted man.

(3) The question, then, is, If the memory and the conscience and the heart and the will have got to be turned, are we converted? It is a very practical question. Are we converted, whether as boys from our earliest time down to now, or have we turned in some sudden way? Is there anything between me and GOD? Are my conscience, will, heart, and memory, all turned to GOD? And how can we settle that? We have got a very ready test in the message, “Except ye

be converted and become like little children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." You have got to be like your little child. Look at your little child for a moment. JESUS took a little child and set him in the midst, and we might imagine Him taking your own little child and bringing him here, and telling us to look at him. That is exactly what He did when He was on earth.

It seems to me that the first thing that strikes us about a child is its innocence. Then we notice a sort of straightforwardness. You would not like to deceive a child. Then there is a capacity of growth in the child which a man has not got. Then there is an extraordinary trust : your little boy does trust what father says. And then there is generally a rare, a touching earnestness about a good child : he takes things seriously. We sometimes imagine that children do not, but as a matter of fact they do. They are very earnest. Have we got those five characteristics ? That settles the question whether we are converted or not. When I ask the question whether we are innocent, of course, it would not be the same thing as the innocence of the child, because we must know more about the world. We cannot expect grown men to have the innocent ignorance of a child ; but the fact that we are grown men is not the slightest reason why our mind should be occupied with evil stories and base imaginations. There is no reason why we should not have the purity and innocence of a child. What are your minds occupied with when you are by yourself ? What do you talk about when a few of you are together ? Those are the questions that settle whether you have got the purity and innocence

of a child. Or, again, have we got the straightforwardness? Are we absolutely straight about our religion? I long to see in the men of London the straightforwardness of a child. Are we meaning business? Do we mean to try to forget all about what we have thus dwelt upon together, or will you say, "I have now got the direct message of the Mission to live up to"? Be perfectly straightforward about it. Let us be brave and bear our witness, and not live the same life we have been living. Are we going to show the capacity for growth that the child has got? It will not be all settled and done with this moment. We may get in the way of salvation now, but we must put ourselves within the reach of all the means of grace and the powers of growth. We have to grow in grace. That means that we must come back to all things that will help us in our growth. If we are not ready to receive the capacity for growth, we are not converted. Again, have we got the trust of the child? What more could GOD have done that He has not done to win our trust? Are we really waiting for another Incarnation, another Agony and Bloody Sweat, waiting for the SON of GOD to come down again? He will never do it. And I say this: the more you think over it the more you will find it true. GOD could not have done more than He has done to win the trust of His children. He has given Himself for them, He has poured His life out to the death for them. Therefore, have trust in GOD; pray for that. Then, lastly, have you the earnestness of the child? This is a serious business. Life is very short, and the unconverted man not merely does so much harm, but he is losing the

opportunity of doing so much good. If we had a body of men in Chiswick absolutely converted, we could change the whole face of the place. It was, I think, Bishop Selwyn who said at Eton : " Give me this chapel full of converted boys, and I will convert the world." It was a magnificent paradox, as we call it, but it is perfectly true. Given a body of really converted men, and there is nothing that they could not do.

I put it, then, to you, with all the love and straightness I can : " Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." O my brothers, let us turn with memory, conscience, heart, and will, to GOD, and bring, if we can, all we love with us, and we shall receive a foretaste at once of the joy in GOD which the world can neither give nor take away.

III

HAMMERSMITH PARISH CHURCH

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

DEATH

“The living know that they shall die.”—ECCLES. ix. 5.

WE have been living in the Church and have been carrying on our Church work this week in a very special way under the shadow of death. Three of the clergy of London have died in this one week ; I buried one of the best-loved of the clergy's wives, who had laboured with her husband faithfully in East and West London ; and two of our lay-workers have also died during the week—one a young doctor up in Hampstead, one of the finest of the Diocesan Readers ; the other Lord Egerton, one of the stanchest and most faithful Churchmen we have had for a long time in England. And therefore I am going to talk very quietly about Death. First, about the certainty of death ; then about the solemnity of it ; then what Christianity has got to say to it ; then what effect it ought to have on us ; and then what effect, as a matter of fact, it does have on us. And what I say to you I shall say as if I was standing in my own room talking to myself. We are all of us exactly on the same level.

(1) First, then, the *Certainty of Death*. I know nothing about what your views are. For instance, I have no time to discuss with you, as I used to do for so many years with the men of East London, the opinions you hold about GOD, Heaven, death, and life. However sceptical any of you may be, there is one thing you do know absolutely for certain—you do know you will die. There have been a few people who have imagined that their great leader was not going to die, but it always ended by that man or woman finally dying. Therefore we may take it as absolutely certain that every one of us—it may be to-morrow, it may be in twenty years—will certainly die; that some time footsteps will be heard stumbling down a staircase where you happen to be living, footsteps of men carrying some rather heavy weight, and that weight will be your body, the very same body that is yours now; that there will be a little band—how well we know it! how often we have seen it!—standing round an open grave, and this grave will differ from all others, because it will be your grave. There will be—how often have I heard it!—the dropping of the clods of earth on a coffin, and the only difference between that and every other coffin will be that it will be your coffin, with your body in the coffin. And that is going to happen absolutely for certain. As life goes on, every year seems to pass more quickly, and it is speeding us on up to that certain, absolutely certain, thing. And the world—that is what it is so hard for us to realise—the world will go on in exactly the same way after we are dead. Have you noticed how accustomed we get to the thought of somebody being dead whom we have known? The first thing

is that we hear, with a little shock, how ill So-and-so is; then we get accustomed to his being ill; then we hear he is much worse, they say there is no chance for him; then we get accustomed to the idea that he is dying; then somebody who passes us on the way to work says: "He is gone, you know." And after a very few days or a few months we get accustomed to the idea that he is dead—quite accustomed to it. And that is exactly what will happen to us. They will say exactly the same things. There will be a little shock of surprise and of pain among our friends when we are taken ill; then we shall get gradually worse; then people will be quite accustomed in a week or a month to the thought that we are dead; then, so far as this world is concerned—it is well for us to face it, because our conceit is apt to creep in at this point—we shall be absolutely forgotten, absolutely wiped out. And that is going to happen as certainly as to-morrow's sun will dawn on this world. "The living know that they will die."

(2) My next point is the *Solemnity of Death*. "Don't say anything about bright death to me!" said a poor girl to me this week, who had watched her mother slowly dying with cancer. "I gave up some time ago praying that she might be spared, but I did pray that she might have a little respite before she died; but she died in increasing agony to the last breath. And therefore don't mock me, Bishop, by talking about bright death"—I suppose alluding to that hymn:

"Bright death, which is the welcome dawn
Of our eternal day."

And I think we do mock mourners when we try and make out that death is too bright a thing. I have never tried myself. People have sometimes said to me—I have been glad when they have said it: “Why you comfort us, Bishop, is because you never underrate sorrow.” And I believe it is far better not to underrate sorrow, or the ghastliness, as it very often is, of death. There was not much brightness for two girls I saw lately who had lost their father and mother both in the same week; nor did I feel it very bright as I knelt with a widow yesterday beside the coffin of her late husband in what had been his study. And therefore we must not underrate the solemnity of death. Old Aristotle used to say very curtly in his terse way: “Death is the end.” Of course, he thought it was. He did not know anything more about it. “Death is the end.” And so it is in one sense the end. In one sense it is perfectly true to say it is the end of a man’s probation; it is the end of life as we know it here; it is the end of the friendships as we know them on earth. Never more, never more will the wife sit opposite her husband at the well-known table where she sat for so many years; never again will friend walk arm-in-arm with friend; never more will your little child in this world fling his arms round your neck. Death is the end in this sense. And Christianity finds death here. I point out this with some emphasis, because among the questions asked me is one contained in a very bitter and a sorrowful letter, from a man who puts on Christianity the blame for all the pain and all the death and sorrow in the world. I should like to say that is not fair. Blot out the New Testament, and

you still find death. Imagine that we had never heard of JESUS CHRIST, and we still get death. Christianity, then, does not create death or pain.

(3) Our third question is, *What light has Christianity to throw* on something that is there? That is the point. Remember that death, pain, suffering, are here even if we had never heard the name of JESUS CHRIST. But what Christianity does is to light up death, just as the sun lights up a cloud. It does not make the cloud cease to be a cloud; the cloud is there. JESUS wept when His friend died, although He knew He was going to raise him again, because He felt human sympathy with the mourners around Him, and He realised the pathos of death. But Christianity lights up this cloud, and the reason I want you all to be Christian men is because I want you to share the light which Christianity throws upon death. You have all got to go through death. Many of you have got to see those you most dearly love on earth die. Those of you who are young will probably see nearly all those you love die before yourselves. Therefore I want you to share what seems to me the threefold light which Christianity throws upon this dark cloud of death.

(a) And the first light which it throws is that it tells us what is a great surprise in its way, something we should not have known for certain—that Aristotle was wrong. Death is not the end. Of course, we might have guessed that it was not, much more easily than they could when the old philosopher lived many ages ago. Science has helped us a great deal since his time in guessing that death would not be the end. We have learnt that the light of a candle, when you

blow it out, passes into another sphere; the force persists in another form. If you read the works of Sir Oliver Lodge, for instance, though he does not go all the way with us in Christian belief, you will find that he holds very strongly that personality goes on. There are things that you see and touch which are almost certainly unreal things. "The things that are seen are temporal, and the things that are not seen are eternal." Science tells us that to-day, and therefore we might have guessed that death was not the end. Some of you were at school thirty or forty years ago. There is not a particle of your body left which was at school, and yet it is the same body, the same man. Why should you think it such an incredible thing that you should be the same man after death, when your body had had one more change? But while I admit that, I should not feel that I could use at funerals those words "sure and certain hope," if that was all that I knew, if it was only a splendid guess, a mere instinct of immortality; I want something more firm. When I see death come close to me I want something more certain, and Christianity throws this light upon death as not being the end by JESUS CHRIST's splendid promise which He attested as true on Easter Day: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Of course, if He had not risen Himself on Easter Day we might have thought that only an unfulfilled promise; but I am preaching to you the holy Christian faith as taught from the beginning; I speak nothing about any New Theology. And therefore I preach to you that the Being

Who spoke those words, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," rose on Easter Day,* and made this claim: "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." And what comforts me as I see one after another die is that the One Who has the keys of hell and of death has "opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers," as is so splendidly sung in the *Te Deum*.

(b) The *second light* which Christianity throws upon the cloud is that death is not necessarily a change for the worse. Notice how careful I am in saying those words, "*not necessarily*" a change for the worse. All the ancients thought it a terrible change for the worse—going out of the light of love into the awful darkness. It *may* be a change for the worse. Why? Because Judas went, we are told, "to his own place"—the place which he had prepared for himself by his own life of avarice and selfishness on earth. Dives went to his own place. And the awful fact, that I must not shirk—if I am to be honest with you, is that for some of you death might be a very dreadful change for the worse. You might go to "your own place" to-night. There is nothing arbitrary about it. We cannot fit ourselves in five minutes for a place of holiness. If you are not living pure and godly lives, if you died in your sin to-night, you would go to your own place, wherever that is—I cannot possibly know—by the operation of an inevitable spiritual law, for it would be the place you have been preparing for yourself all the past years of your life. And

* See the Easter Sermon, pp. 182-188.

therefore death might be a change for the worse for some of us. But the joyful news of Christianity is this—that it might be a change for the better. St. Paul said: “It is better to depart and be with CHRIST, far better.” He was then suffering pain and in chains, and he looked forward to a glorious home, a place of peace, out of the suffering, and out of the pain. If you have seen your dear wife or your sister or your children taken from you, do not let anyone cheat you of the glorious light which Christianity has thrown on this dark cloud of death. There is a place of peace:

“Far out of sight, while sorrows still enfold us,
Lies the fair country where our hearts abide;
And of its joys is naught more wondrous told us
Than these few words, ‘We shall be satisfied.’”

And therefore do not be afraid to think of that fair country as a place of brightness and happiness. A friend whose wife I buried lately told me that he had a sense of triumph over death when his nearest and dearest was taken from him. It is true to say that, while death is a gloomy portal, it is a portal to the brightness of eternal life. We *can* say “Bright death” if we understand it in that sense.

(c) Then, again, Christianity lights up what is to many the most awful part of death—the loneliness of it. It seems like going away from the warm home and the sight of father and mother, of wife or children—all alone, out into the night. But if Christianity is true, we do not go out into the night alone at all. GOD’S promise is: “Though thou goest through the valley and shadow of death, thou needest fear no evil.”

“Lo ! I am with you all the days”—not only to the day of death, mark you, but “even to the end of the world.” “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” How often have I repeated that to the dying !

There is, then, the certainty of death, there is the gloom of death, yet in those three ways our glorious religion lights up that cloud. It makes it bright as a cloud is brightened sometimes in the sunshine, and makes me thank GOD every day I live that I am a Christian.

(4) Now the question is, *What effect ought this to have upon our lives ?* Ought it to make us what it sometimes makes people—morbid ? I come across people in the Mission who have one horror, and that is death. Many poor things lying on their beds, as I go round sick-visiting, say : “I do not like to tell anyone else, Bishop, but I do fear death. I see death coming down on me like a great shadow nearer and nearer every day.” I often tell the story of how I comforted one poor girl by saying : “Well, you would not mind my taking you up and carrying you into the next room ?” “Oh no,” she said. “Well, there is Someone ten thousand times kinder than I Who will carry you into the next room.” She died two days afterwards with a smile on her face. Death ought not to be a morbid terror to any of us. You young men and boys, I do not want you to go about with a morbid dread of death, or always thinking of death in that sense. Life, life you are promised. “He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him a long life, even for ever and ever.” “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” That is the

promise of CHRIST. I do not want you to think of death so as to become gloomy or morbid or terror-stricken ; but, on the other hand, do I want you to forget it ? I say deliberately that compared with the man who is living his life to-day, and forgets he is going to die, a man in an asylum is a sane person. You are mad if you forget you are going to die. What would the tradesmen of Hammersmith think of a man who knew that at a certain fixed date his whole business would have to be wound up, and he took no account of it, but went on as if that day was not coming at all ? They would say he was mad. I have often thought of a story I read, I think, in Law's " Serious Call." I read it at the very beginning of my ministry, before I was ordained, and it has remained in my memory throughout my ministerial life. A young tradesman was dying, and was so near death that his friends gathered round him, and they really thought he was unconscious, if not actually dead. They said among themselves : " What a pity it is that a young man like this should die in the very prime of life ! Why, he might have made a fortune if he had lived ! He was the best hand at a bargain in the whole town." Their friend was not unconscious, and he heard what they said, and he raised himself on his elbow and looked them in the face, and said : " My friends, I have heard what you said ; but put yourselves in my place, try to imagine, as is true of myself, that all the gold in the world could not buy you back more than five minutes of life. I ask you whether those are the thoughts that would be a comfort to you—that you were the best hand at a bargain in the town, and

that you might have made a fortune if you had lived ? All thoughts like that are swallowed up in the one awful thought that in five minutes I have to meet my GOD, and I have to meet Him *empty-handed*, with nothing whatever to show for my life. I have not used the Mammon of unrighteousness as a good steward ; I have made no friends who will receive me ; I have done nothing but try and make money ; I never tried to help anyone—I have been too busy, too much wrapped up in my affairs. If I could only think of something I had done, some good deed that I had done for GOD for pure love of Him ; if I could only feel that my life had not been utterly wasted, that might bring me some peace at the last.” Now I want you, not morbidly, but quite quietly, to put yourself in imagination on your death-bed. After all, it is only anticipating a few years, even for the longest life among us. What is going to bring you peace at the last ? Not the fact that you were the best hand at a bargain. Christianity does not in the least discourage men from being energetic in business, and hard workers. The Christian worker ought to be the best worker in the place. But it does discourage—ay, it does more than that : it warns us against spending the whole of our little probation-time here given to fit us for eternity on nothing but temporal affairs. What about the spiritual accounts of your life ? How often have you prayed since last Sunday ? How much time do you spend upon the real person who will survive when your body is dead ? Your clever business habits will be of no account then. What is the person like, the man who has been sent here to be trained for eternity ? It is not that you

are a business-man who happens to have an immortal soul ; you are an immortal soul who happens to be a business man for a few years. The fact of death, the certainty of death, ought to affect our business life, our home life, our friendships, our plans, and our spiritual life. How does it affect your business life? Are you strictly honourable, considerate, setting aside a definite amount of what you make for the good of the Church, that is of GOD'S kingdom on earth? It is all GOD'S money, every bit of it. Not a penny belongs to you. Are you doing something for the Church besides your own professional work? Are you going to help to give the Church of England Men's Society a good start in Hammersmith? What about your home life? If you died to-morrow morning or to-night, would you have been a good husband, a good brother, a good father, bringing up the children to say their prayers and read their Bibles? Will they always remember you, and say: "I had such a good father; he set me such a good example"? Or is the example of the father the curse of the family? I do not know at all. I want you to ask yourself this question in the light of death. What about your friendships? Are there some friendships which you have formed which would not stand the test of death? The glorious thing about true friendship is that it goes on. There is our friend waiting for us, or we may be waiting for him or her, in Paradise. All really pure and beautiful friendship goes on into the other world. But there are some things that go under the name of friendship which are disloyal and misleading. There are immoral intimacies that are not friendships at all.

What about your plans for the future? Some of you are planning out your life. Have you left out this great solemn fact—the one certain thing? What are you going to do with your life? How will it look when you lie on your death-bed?

Then, lastly, what about your spiritual life? The man who understands what death is, the man who understands what is the one hope in death, will pray every morning, will read a bit of his Bible every day, will come to church every Sunday, will come out and be confirmed, and will surely in time wish to be in closest communion with the One Who will be his only hope when he goes through the valley of the shadow of death. Every Christian who understands the doctrine he holds is a reverent and earnest communicant.

Let us, then, face the certainty, the solemnity, and the true meaning of death, “that we may abound in the work of the LORD,” as that old funeral chapter so splendidly concludes, “forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the LORD.”

IV

ST. JOHN'S, WALHAM GREEN

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

TO MEN ONLY

TEMPTATION

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him."—ST. JAMES i. 12.

I AM going to talk to you now on the subject of "temptation"—temptation, its reality, its universality, its persistence, and the way we have to face it. (1) First, *the reality of temptation*. Now I dare say there are some of you who will be inclined to say: "Well, Bishop, you need not spend much time on this first point. I know perfectly well what I am tempted by: my temptation is drink, my temptation is lust, my temptation is bad thoughts, my temptation is temper, my temptation is gambling." All I can say is, that if you have got so far, and if you know quite clearly what your temptation is, you are on the way to the cure. When people ask me whether they have sinned against the HOLY GHOST, and are sometimes in a terror lest they have committed the unpardonable sin, I answer that certainly they would not be sorry or concerned about it if they had. Those

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who sin against the HOLY GHOST say, " Evil, be thou my good," and they feel no sorrow about it at all. If you are struggling, if you are perfectly clear you have got to fight, and battle down your temptation, then forewarned is forearmed. But I feel very anxious about the man who perhaps thinks that he has no temptation at all, and I will tell you why. When you are on a bicycle you do not feel the wind when you are going with it; but when you turn round and are going against the wind, then you find what a wind there is. And the man for whom I fear is not the one who is struggling against drink, gambling, lust, or temper, and who feels the wind, but it is the man who is really going downhill, down the wind, and who is quite pleased with himself. If there is a man among you who feels no sort of struggle in his life, I would ask him to ask himself the same six questions on this particular point which I have already tried to bring home. Are you obeying—I am asking this to bring out the reality of temptation—those six fundamental laws of GOD? One, the law of absolute purity in thought, and word, and deed? If any of you are befooling yourselves with the devil's lie that GOD cannot demand real personal purity in thought, word, and deed, you are under a terrible delusion. GOD, Who has given us our bodies, did not give a moral law which those bodies could not keep; GOD expects, and will expect when we meet Him, that we shall have kept His law of purity in thought, and word, and deed, and He will take no sort of excuse. Before you say, " It is no temptation to me," be certain you have pushed that law home upon your conscience.

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Then the second law, dependence on GOD—have you kept that? Have you been absolutely regular in your prayers, in your church, in depending upon GOD all the time? GOD'S great decree was this, "Without Me ye can do nothing," and no man is more completely a man than when he kneels down and quite humbly says "Our FATHER." Is that the sort of life you have been living from boyhood up to now? Have you been obeying His law of work? What have you ever done for GOD? I am not talking to you, I hope, as if I were scolding; I am talking to myself as well. In what way is the world better for you and for your having been here at all? "Son, go work in my vineyard" is said to everyone. "Work, work, work, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." Are you active members of the Church of England Men's Society? Have you brought other men to church? Take the law of witness. Are you a firm, brave witness in your warehouse, in your shop, in your home, for JESUS CHRIST? Are you obeying the law of correspondence? Are you led by the SPIRIT of GOD every day? Are you looking for the leadership of the HOLY SPIRIT so as to follow Him wherever He leads? "As many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the sons of GOD." And are you obeying the law of day by day, of quiet trust day by day? Until you have applied those six laws to your life you cannot be certain that you are not tempted to the reverse of those things. You cannot be certain you are not tempted to lust, that you are not tempted to self-dependence, that you are not being tempted to laziness, that you are not being tempted to cowardice,

that you are not being tempted to hide your colours before other people, that you are not being tempted to spiritual slackness, that you are not being tempted to worry—worry, which often perhaps drives the wife at home almost mad, and spoils the spiritual calm of your soul. And therefore the first thing I want you to face with me is the reality of temptation.

(2) Secondly, there is the *universality of it*. We are all tempted. Do not think to yourselves, "You talk to us, Bishop, but you lead such a different life from ours; you do not have our temptations; you do not have to stand in the workshop and hear filth all day; you do not know what it is to look in vain for a meal; you do not know what it is to have to drive a team of horses through the City, and keep your temper all day as I have." I *do not* know what that is, but I have got my own temptations. The devil knows perfectly well how to tempt every one of us, and he has the temptation ready for me as well as you. And the point which should encourage us in our temptation is this, that JESUS CHRIST was tempted Himself. I have had many questions asked during the Mission about those temptations of JESUS CHRIST. Several people want to know how it is that a perfectly good and sinless person could be tempted, but read the record in your New Testament, and see on how many points JESUS CHRIST was tempted. To me this is a great comfort, as I shall show you presently. When I am tempted I fly to One Who was tempted first and did not fall. I believe that we have a High Priest Who knows what our temptations are, and Who because He knows what temptation is Himself can give us strength in our hour of danger. It

would be no good to go to Him unless He was tempted Himself. I have been reading two books this morning on Temptation—one by Bishop Hall, from the other side of the water, on “The Temptation of Jesus Christ,” and another book by a Professor of Cambridge, Professor Knight, also on “Temptation.” And if you are not yourself certain about CHRIST being tempted, read one or other of those books. He was tempted first through the body, tempted again to take a short and easy road, and not the roundabout way of the cruel, blood-stained Cross to convince the world that He was the SON of GOD. He was tempted to presumption, to presume upon His position, and fling Himself down because the angels would take charge of Him. He was tempted to summon legions of angels, and be done with the hooting and the persecution. If He had given way you and I would not have been saved. He was tempted all the time. When I say temptation is universal, I include the temptation of JESUS CHRIST, the holiest and best Person Who ever lived, Who was subject to a fierce blast of temptation every moment He lived. We are living in a fool’s paradise if we are not prepared for temptation.

(3) Then, thirdly, I want you to notice that temptation is *persistent*. I have had several ask me this Mission whether they must not be very wicked people, because they have the same bad thoughts to fight against now which they had when they were boys; they say: “Surely if I had been a real Christian I should have got rid of that temptation altogether.” Remember this: temptation is not sin. You have not sinned because you have this temptation which

you had when a boy. There is a full blast of temptation on you, but if you have not yielded you have not sinned. And the people who are making themselves miserable by thinking that because they have not got rid of every temptation therefore they are in a peculiar sense sinners in the sight of GOD are making themselves sad when GOD has not made them sad. When our countrymen were being besieged at Ladysmith the bombardment became a sort of daily business ; they got accustomed to hearing the guns booming on the hills over Ladysmith, and bombs falling perpetually. When they got up in the morning there were the same Boers on the hills, and our people got accustomed to this as one of the facts of life. So in our life every morning there will be the little tents where the enemy lies, the same temptations going on year after year, year in and year out, to the end of our lives, and perhaps in the last moment, at our death, still the enemy will be in position directing his forces against us. Archbishop Temple, speaking to a body of men, said (and his voice trembled when he said it) : " Why is the struggle so fearfully long ?" Perhaps some of you say : " Why is the struggle so fearfully long ?" It is fearfully long for all of us. The blast of temptation will go on, and the guns of the enemy will be fired to the last day of our lives, because temptation is part of the conditions of our life.

(4) And that brings me, in the fourth place, to ask this question, which very naturally may occur to your own minds, Why is this so ? Why has GOD so arranged our life that we are tempted every day of it ? I think I can tell you.

Temptation

(a) First, because there is a Tempter. You know, people are trying to do away with the devil in our generation—and I do not deny that those foolish pictures of the devil which one used to see in some books made the subject ridiculous. But you never make a greater mistake in your life than in thinking the devil does not exist or is dead. Nothing plays into his hand better than that sort of idea, and he is never more dangerous than when he is “shamming dead.” Read the New Testament, and see if it is possible to read it and not believe in an evil spirit. Our LORD said: “Simon, Simon, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven.” He says: “The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me; that is, findeth nothing in Me to fasten on.” But insert, instead of Satan, what some popular writers would have us put—evil influences. “Simon, Simon, evil influences desire to have you, that they may sift you as wheat.” “I beheld evil influences as lightning fall from Heaven!” “Evil influences come, and find nothing in Me.” The sentences become nonsense. And therefore we may as well face it, that there is an evil spirit—who we believe became evil by perverted free-will, just as man becomes evil by misusing his free-will. He has only a limited power and is not a god. I had to face this earlier in the Mission—not a god. GOD is the GOD of Hell as well as Heaven. There are not two gods, one called the devil and the other GOD. But he has tempted so many people in his life, he knows human nature so well, that we are simply madmen if we forget him. He knows by experience the weak spot in every one of us; he knows what your weakness is, and what my

weakness is. And therefore, one of the reasons why we are bound to be tempted is that there is a Tempter. And if people say, "Well, that is a harsh Gospel," I would reply that if I was going down a road on a dark night, and there was a wild beast in my path, I would rather know it than not know it. Those who tell us of our danger are our best friends. (b) And when you look at it a little closer, it is not merely that there is a Tempter, an evil spirit, that knows your weakness and mine, but I think I can understand why it is that GOD allows the Tempter to tempt. We are talking a good deal now about "Dreadnoughts." What would be the good of one of our great armoured ships if the plates were never tested at all? What would be the strength of goodness supposing it was never tried? People used to say in East London: "If GOD wants to make me good, why does He not put a sign in the sky? I should believe then. Or let Him wave a magic wand over East London and make us all good?" Would that be worth anything in the world? Positively nothing. The only goodness which is worth anything is freely chosen goodness—goodness which is chosen in the teeth of temptation. The man, for instance, who has to struggle with his temper, gets a strong, settled habit of self-control; it is some credit to the man who has to fight the drink curse that he is a sober man; the boy or young man who has to keep his thoughts from sensual ideas, who has to struggle on and pray and fight against them, gets a purity and self-control worth having. The blessing is this, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation," because when he is proved, like one of those armoured plates which has been tested and

proved, he shows a goodness which is worth having, and receives the crown of life promised to them that love GOD. Often and often men have asked me after my lectures : " Why am I not, like a clock, wound up and bound to go right ?" I have replied : " Then your righteousness would be worth nothing." I would rather be a man with all the risks, with free-will, able to choose right or wrong—and every man worth his salt would say the same—than be a miserable puppet bound to go one way.

I have proved this, then, to you : temptation is desperately real, absolutely universal, persistent all through life, though sometimes weakening here or there and not always of equal strength, and temptation is a necessity for us in this fallen world.

(5) Now I come to my fifth question, *How are we to meet it ?* And that is why I took these words from that wonderfully straight writer St. James. He always goes straight to the point in all he says, under the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT. Knowing human nature well and what people are apt to say to themselves, he says : " Let no man say, I am tempted of GOD : for GOD tempteth no man ; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed." Is it not true that men are inclined to say : " I am tempted of GOD " ? Do you not find yourself sometimes laying the blame of your circumstances or your failures upon GOD ? I assure you that half the letters I get are complaints of people who say " I went to such a bad school," " I went to such a bad workshop," or " I had such bad companions " ; they lay the blame generally on anything but on themselves. (a) Now, the first necessity—and I have got

to be perfectly straight about this—is that, if there comes to your memory something which you know you did wrong and in which you yielded to temptation, you acknowledge that you need not have done it. Be honest. Admit to yourselves, “I need not have said that thing, I need not have done that ; it was because I had not said my prayers that morning, or I had given up going to church, or had not exercised self-control enough, or because I had been reading sceptical books which upset my belief in religion.” You need not have done it, need you ? I do not think it possible to get any farther until we have quite acknowledged to ourselves, about anything in which we yielded to temptation, that we knew at the bottom of our souls that we need not have done it. Confession is admitting that the thing is wrong, and that we did it, and that it was our fault. There is an old formula sometimes used, “Of my fault, my own most grievous fault.” I would ask you, then, before we go any farther, have you admitted that you were really wrong over that ? You were tempted and fell, but you need not have done it. If you admit that, you have gone more than half-way to conquering entirely and getting the better of it. You need not have put your money, which ought to have gone to your wife and children, on that horse which you never saw. You need not have gone on drinking at the public-house. You need not have read those books which defiled your imagination. You need not have used that language in the presence of the boys, and you ought to admit that you were very wrong in doing it. “If any man will confess his sin, GOD is faithful and just to forgive him his sin.”

(b) Then, when we have admitted it, and seen where we went wrong, we have got a second thing to do: mark off that ground as dangerous. When we go down the river we see at certain places "Dangerous" put up. Do not let us be too proud to acknowledge that where we yielded to that temptation is dangerous ground for us. "How could you have the heart," the devil is said to have been asked once, "to tempt so innocent and so young a girl?" "Why not?" he said; "she came on to my ground." Now, is there some place which is the devil's ground to you? some friend at whose house, when you go round, you fall into the old temptation? That is the devil's ground to you. Do not say: "Oh, but I should be cutting myself off from my freedom!" What did our LORD say? "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; and if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, for it is better to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." It is better to lose a little of your liberty and get the whole character and life saved. And therefore I do hope that if there is anyone who knows perfectly well that a friendship is damning his soul, that that particular place is his curse, that that particular habit of his has been his downfall before, and may be again, he will cut it off now. I once went to see a man after a Mission Service, and he said: "Your eye was on me the whole time. This is my chain, and you know it." And he smashed a brandy bottle into pieces, saying: "Thus I break my chain." Are there any chains to be broken like that by you? Do not hesitate, because perhaps you never will be spoken to again as GOD is speaking to your soul now

(c) Thirdly, you say: "Well, Bishop, I am not quite like that, because, as a matter of fact, I am bound to go back to-morrow morning into the very place where my temptation is. I don't go to a place where I need not go. I hear the language while I am at work. The man next to me in the office uses bad language, the place where I go in the dinner-hour to get my food is the place where I get tempted." Well, we have got to face that. What is to be done when you have to go into temptation? When you say, "Lead us not into temptation," that is a prayer which cannot literally be fulfilled for you, because you are obliged to go into temptation. What can you do? I will tell you. I am certain of this, that where we are obliged to go, there we may go, with certain precautions, perfectly safely; we may do the dangerous thing if we are obliged to do it. But if we do it we must be armed with the Christian armour, we must have the helmet of hope, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shield of faith, on which to catch the fiery darts of the Evil One; we must have the sword of a good, thorough knowledge of the Bible, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD"; we must have the breastplate, which protects the vitals, and which comes from a settled habit of self-control. Why should not we have that? If we leave one single place open, that is exactly where the enemy gets his dagger in. It is not a thing which only the clergy or a few special Church laymen are supposed to have. The Christian armour is for every man; every man has to fight the battle of life. I wonder why more of you do not avail yourselves of all the armour of GOD. Why are you, for instance, not all

confirmed? Why do you not receive the power of the HOLY SPIRIT in the laying on of hands? Commit yourself before the Church to what you wish to be. And why are not more of you communicants? It is terrible to think how few men communicants there are, compared to what there should be. Why do you not have what was meant to be the greatest safeguard and strength for the battle of life? Remember what General Gordon used to say out in Egypt—he was a man if ever there was one: “There is no eating here.” What did he mean? To his great loss and disappointment, there was no opportunity of receiving the Holy Communion. “There is no eating here.” Simple Churchman as he was in his ideas, he recognised as a man who had studied his Bible that JESUS CHRIST had meant to give the Holy Communion for the workers, for the fighters in the battle of life. Therefore if you go into the battle and do the work, you ought to be fully armed at all points. “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.”

(d) Fourthly, do not forget that you and I never need be alone in this battle. Of all the striking pictures in the Old Testament—and remember the Old Testament is not out of date; modern knowledge has shown that the dates once assigned to some of the books are not exact; but the whole is as strong and virile and as full of instruction as ever—one of the most touching pictures is that of the three young men who went into the flames because they were faithful to their GOD; and the fire did not burn them. When their persecutors looked down into the fire they saw these three young men were not alone; there was a fourth with them, “and the form of the fourth was as the SON of GOD.”

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Do not be afraid of the fire of persecution, such as you may have to endure in your place of business. You are not alone. The fire of that persecution cannot touch you, nor will the smell of fire pass on you. You are tempted, but you cannot be consumed if you take into that fire with you Another, and the form of that Other is the SON of GOD. We have a High Priest Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and Who was on all points tempted as we are, though without sin. In my temptations and in yours it is the glory of our life to know that JESUS is with us all the days, even to the end of the world.

Now, how do we stand about all this? I am sure that some of you perhaps say: "I know all about this." I come to preach to those who do not know about it. Is this news to some of you? Have some of you been going on with your life and work quite asleep to this awful danger in which you are, and the temptation which is all round you? You are like a man going to sleep in the middle of a battle. "Awake, awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and CHRIST shall give thee life." That is the message for you. Awake, awake in time, before it is too late. Or are you one of those who are in despair, who are fighting some old fight, some old struggle, and say, "I am in despair about it. I came round here, but I am really in despair"? Many a man has said that to me. Realise, then, that temptation is not sin. That is the greatest comfort I can give you. "GOD shall forgive you all but your despair." Despair is the one fatal thing. Pluck up courage, take the helmet of hope and the breastplate of righteousness, and you shall be more

than conqueror, through Him Who loved you. Or do you say : " Well, all this does not touch me. I am much too strong ; I do not fear ; I conquered my temptations long ago. I do not feel this message has much to do with me " ? I would say to you : " Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. " No one is in such a dangerous state as one who is self-confident, and thinks he is in no danger at all. Some of the most astounding falls are of those who have been looked upon as most religious, and who have lost their caution. And, lastly, there may be a man who is not so much self-confident as self-reliant. One man said once to me in a Mission : " Well, Dr. Ingram, the truth of the matter is I am a great believer, but I am a self-believer. I believe in myself. " I do not know whether I produced any conviction on the old gentleman in my talk with him, but there is nothing more foolish than being a self-believer. We have not got to be as independent as we like in some ways, but not independent of GOD. No, not that. GOD forbid ! And I have preached in vain indeed to you, if I have not got this home to you. Without GOD'S SPIRIT you cannot win, and with His SPIRIT nothing can beat you. Let us go forward, then, to the work which lies before us, conscious of the danger, of the reality, of the persistence of temptation, but full of hope. " Those that be with us are more than those who are with them " ; and let us try and inherit the blessing promised by St. James : " Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him. "

ADDRESS TO GIRLS

ST. PAUL'S GIRLS' SCHOOL, HAMMERSMITH

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON*

THE CHRISTIAN GIRL

I AM going to take as my subject "The Christian Girl"—what she believes, what she is hoping, what she is praying, and what she is doing. And as I try and talk to you quite simply about what I mean by the ideal Christian girl, let your heart go up, and say to yourself, "Am I like that?" and may your resolution be: "If I am not like that, if I am not strong on that point, I will try to attain to it." As I speak to you simply from GOD—they are not my own words, but they are put into my mouth to speak to you—say to yourselves: "Cannot I be a little more like this ideal Christian girl whom the Bishop has painted for us?"

(1) First, *what does the Christian girl believe?* I hold that she ought to be intellectually, morally, and spiritually, the happiest girl in the world. I will tell you why.

* This address was given in the course of the Mission to the 200 girls of St. Paul's Girls' School, at the special request of the headmistress, in the Great Hall of the School.

(a) First, intellectually. I suppose some of you may be old enough to go through that most distressing time which I went through when I was a boy in the sixth form in my public school. Of course, I know, on looking back, that my boyish faith was simply passing through a stage by which it was being merged into my man's faith. Therefore it was not much to be distressed about, if I had understood what was taking place. I was one of the merriest boys in the school. I remember my own nickname—I do not mean to tell you what it was, but it represented that I was supposed to be one of the lightest-hearted boys in the school; and yet I remember hours of sadness when I was by myself. I remember the time when I wandered about in the playground or elsewhere, and wondered what was behind everything: could I believe there was a GOD at all? I see now it was the questioning mind of the boy. I was bound to ask as a boy before I could believe as a man. And I have always been indebted to my experiences of that time, because I have been able to help other people more sympathetically than if I had not had them. I think it quite possible that some of you elder girls may be going through that time now. Intellectually we ought to have much more joy in our religion than we have, because we really know what is behind this world; we have been told the secret. If you have read the history of heathen philosophy, you know it consists of a series of guesses on behalf of people as to what was behind and what was at the centre of the world. One thought there was water, another fire, another thought there was a

jealous devil at the centre. But to my mind even to-day, after all this time, religion should be a source of more intellectual joy to me. I know, I *know*—I do not take any credit to myself—the child has been told the great secret by one he ought thoroughly to trust. And therefore you and I—I am confining myself to the Christian girl—ought to be intellectually happy, because we have been told what is at the centre of everything, that there is a living Person, and this living Person has all the characteristics of which we have been speaking in the Mission—He is good, loving, forgiving, full of providential care to each individual, self-sacrificing, and strong. We have dwelt on each characteristic; we dwell this week on the individual care of GOD. “The hairs of your head are all numbered.” As I look at you I love to think that this loving Person at the centre of everything, whose child you are, counts every hair of your head, knows all about you, and knows what will happen to you in the future, and that you have all of GOD to care for you as if there was not another living person in the world. It is a most delightful thought. Intellectually it gives one a wonderful centre for the universe. Again, intellectually, do you not see how it affects all your studies? History is simply a record of GOD’S working in the world; ancient and modern history alike describes GOD’S working, and tell us how GOD has been working in the world for His own purposes. Geography, or any other such branch of knowledge, gains a new meaning as one realises how gradually the maps have been covered, and different parts of the world have been formed. My friend Lieutenant Shackleton came to talk to me before he faced the

Antarctic regions. He would have to spend many dark nights alone, and he would be glad to have a straight talk with somebody, and he had a talk with me. I am proud of my friend, who has now made himself such a name, by almost reaching the South Pole. You may have seen *Punch* at the time when the news of his achievements was received. I was amused very much by a joke in it, by a picture of what the North Pole said to the South Pole on the telephone: "They nearly had you that time"; and the answer came through the telephone—"Yes, indeed, there will soon be no privacy anywhere." I mention that as illustrating what I am saying about discoveries in geography; they all add to our knowledge of GOD. I am never afraid, and I do not want you to be afraid, of any discovery or inscription in Asia Minor. Some people go about with a heavy heart for fear of some further discovery in Egypt or elsewhere. Truth cannot contradict itself; it is impossible. Truth is one, and therefore nothing can be discovered which can contradict the truth we hold, because truth is one. When we have an intellectual centre all our work becomes a unity, and we rejoice on learning more about modern discovery because it reveals to us more of our FATHER's world. And not only that; I rejoice in what is called "The Higher Criticism," up to a point, because such criticism has given us more knowledge about ancient documents and the places where they were written. You have no notion, when you have once got a belief in a living Person behind everything, how fearless you are; you are not afraid of any discovery at all.

(b) If the Christian girl is intellectually happy, how

much more should she be morally happy! I remember a man, who knew the undergraduates of Oxford very well, saying to me about some of them getting into temptation and trials: "Some of them do not know yet *where to go to for strength.*" That has remained in my mind after fifteen years. They *do* know now, and I never saw such a wonderful increase in religion within the last fifteen years as has taken place at Oxford and Cambridge. There is no place where religion has a stronger hold than in Oxford and Cambridge, and at Yale University in America. At Yale last year I addressed in a hall like this, or rather larger than this, some thousand or fifteen hundred young men in the morning, and they sent me a round-robin, asking me to speak again to them in the afternoon. This was not part of the advertised programme. And then I had another five hundred to whom I gave a message about CHRIST. That will illustrate my point, which I make in passing, on the importance of having a strong religious earnestness in your school. You do not want to be behind the religious fervour of the young men of England; the religious fervour in these two schools connected with St. Paul's ought to go on side by side. The Christian girl ought to be morally happy, because she does know where to go to for strength; that is the lovely thing! When you kneel down I want you to realise this, that you have the whole of GOD'S power at your disposal. It does not mean we have got the forty-millionth part of His attention. That is not the teaching of Christianity at all. GOD is infinite, and can give the whole of Himself to me and the whole of Himself to

you at the same time. How can you begin ? Suppose you are in despair about your temper, and you want to get the better of it, or perhaps you have some home worry which is rather difficult to manage. How can you despair if you believe that, when you kneel down, the whole of GOD'S power is at your disposal ? I take you into my confidence in coming here. I am almost overwhelmed with worries and work and numbers of petitions to be offered, and masses of questions to be answered to-night,* and worrying things in the diocese, and, on the top of it all, a bad headache ; but I simply ask GOD to use me. I feel certain He sent me here. Well, that gives me a moral peace. I have done my best to think about what I should say to you, but I do not worry about it, because I am absolutely certain that the Person, the Divine, living Person, at the centre of everything, whose children you are, and whose servant I am, will use what I say to help you. It is not a question of *me* at all. He speaks through His servant, and therefore He gives me moral peace. I want you to say to yourself : " Why should not I have moral strength, moral happiness ? Why should I sit down under this difficulty, this anxiety, or this jealousy ? I can have moral strength to meet it as a Christian girl. I know where to go to for strength. I ought to have known, and the Bishop has reminded me. If I kneel down GOD will give me moral strength."

(c) So that makes the Christian girl not only intellectually and morally, but spiritually, happy. Of course, it is a happy thing to have a home. I do

* This address was followed by the Wednesday evening address in Hammersmith Church.

hope you have got an unbroken home, with father and mother alive and brothers and sisters, because there is nothing like a home. One of GOD'S best gifts is a good home. But I want you to have something within you which will make you independent of that home. I mean to say, I want you to have a mind which will be its own peace. Many of the petitions that come in during the Mission are on behalf of children who have lost fathers and mothers, and in some of the cases their faith goes down in trouble at once like a pack of cards. It is not strong enough to carry them through. Let me illustrate this for a moment. One of the dearest of the wives of the clergy of the diocese died a short time ago. It was an ideal marriage; the two had worked in East London and West London; they have got a dear girl about the age of fifteen. Picture her by her mother's grave! I have no doubt whatever that GOD comforted and carried her through. He would not, you see, if she had not had faith, if she had not had a Christian girl's belief. You ought to pray for her. I have prayed for her. It is the greatest strain a girl can have. Her mother was still quite young. Of course, that may come to any of you, or something like it, and what I hope is that when it comes you will remember my words. You are not alone, because the FATHER is with you, and "underneath are the everlasting arms." He has said: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" — "No one shall pluck you out of your FATHER'S hands." All these words sound in your ears as words which you have often heard or read before, but they come with astounding force when you want them. They will have saved that girl from despair; she

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knows that her mother has only been taken to the Home where she will be waiting for her. The Christian girl knows for certain that the father whose heart is so sore will be carried through this trouble. That is the Christian girl's spiritual peace and joy. And therefore I want, before I pass to the next point, to feel that spiritually, morally, and intellectually, the Christian girl ought to be strong and happy whatever happens, because of what she believes. Do you believe all that? Have you got a living faith in a living Person? If you are a little uncertain about it, and it seems rather vague, try to get that living faith; go and ask someone to help you. I am sure there are many in this school who are well qualified to help you. Go and open your heart to your mother, who is your natural confidante, or you may feel drawn more to one of the staff here, or to the clergy. Try and build up in yourself this wonderful strength—the Christian girl's living belief in a living GOD.

(2) Well, I get on to my second point, and that is, the Christian girl, *what she hopes*. Now, do not let me put my ideal "too high for mortal man beneath the sky," as the poet says. I think many a girl's hopes centre in a home of her own. And I want at once to say that I consider there is not the slightest harm in looking forward to having a home and finding happiness in human love if certain conditions are observed. One of the best gifts in life is true human love. I am one of the old-fashioned people who think that in the main the best happiness which a woman can have is a happy marriage. But there are certain conditions. If the Christian

girl is to have a hope like that, she must fulfil these.

And the first condition is that she must never have thoughts like those in her mind except through the atmosphere of that perfect girlish innocence and purity which men look upon as the special gift of young girls. I say that, because I was horrified when I was told by someone in whom I have great confidence—not one who gossips or carries scandal about, but who knows a good deal about the girls of West London—that she had been considerably shocked in finding girls talking about things to-day in a way she did not believe she would have been allowed to talk—she was sure she would not—when she was a girl. I do not mean to go into that; I do not want to say anything but what will be a happy memory for you to carry away. But I must put in one warning word: there is nothing more terrible than that girls should speak to one another about things of which they should not speak at all, and, above all, in a manner which they would not wish their mothers to hear. Say nothing which your conscience tells you might do harm in the least degree to some other girl younger than yourself. One more caution. While I say that about marriage—and I believe it to be true—it is becoming increasingly clear that there are more vocations and methods and opportunities for usefulness and happiness for girls and women who are not married than there have ever been before. You may have seen in the papers a remark I made about people being “catty.” I said in a speech to a girls’ school, “Don’t be catty.” Perhaps you don’t know what “catty” means. By “catty” I

mean people who are fond of telling stories about their neighbours without making sure whether they are true or not. I went on to tell those girls that there was all the difference in the world between an old maid and an old cat ; but the papers left out the second part, and I wish to remind you of it. I said : “ Do not be an old cat, but do not be afraid of being an old maid.” My experience is that some of the sweetest and most useful lives lived in London are lived by those whom we used to call “ old maids.” Do not look upon it as a misfortune if it is clear in the providence of GOD that you should live all your life unmarried. Some of the best and most blessed lives are lived by women who are unmarried. Whether it be one or the other is now uncertain to you. What the Christian girl hopes is this : whether it be her lot to marry or not, her life will, as Browning says, be “ a chance of gaining love.” What does he mean by that ? The chance of happy service, through which she may gain the love of the poor, the love of those who need her help, and, above all, the love and approbation—so I interpret the word—of JESUS CHRIST Himself. Life is a chance of gaining love, and therefore the Christian girl’s hope is something like that. This life which she now sees at home and at school is given her by GOD that she may have a chance of using it for the good of the world. The sun of life is rising very brightly for you, or it ought to be, and I should like to give you a motto which I found helped me in trouble, and I pass it on to you : “ Look straight into the light, and you will always have the shadows behind.”

(3) Then, *what does the Christian girl pray ?* Of course, it follows that she prays. She prays for herself,

first of all ; she is bound to do that, but she is not taught to pray for herself as apart from the human race. When we kneel down and say " Our FATHER," we put ourselves side by side with the poorest man and the poorest woman in London. Well, she prays for herself. She prays that all the graces and gifts that she needs for her life may be given her ; she pictures GOD the FATHER with His hands full of gifts—wisdom, power, strength, and love, and saying, " Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find." And she knows she is not forcing GOD to give her these by praying ; He *wants* to do so. But she helps GOD to give them to her by praying. " GOD wants me to help Him," Dr. Robinson says in his book " Co-operation with GOD." I wonder whether that is quite clear to everyone ; it ought to be. Take an illustration. Supposing your father sends down your brother to the city, and says to his friend, " Will you take my boy into your office ?" " Yes," your father's friend says. Your father asks him to bring him on as well as he can. " I will try my best," says the friend. But suppose your brother was not like you, and was not so punctual, not such a hard worker as no doubt all of you are. Your father's friend would not be able to get him on. He might want to, but he could not do it unless there was some response in your brother. Supposing he did not come down until twelve in the morning, and did not take the slightest trouble when he was there ; your father's friend could not make him a success. Similarly GOD is trying to bring us on, to make us good men and women ; but if we do not respond, if we are irresponsive, He cannot do it. Even JESUS CHRIST could do no mighty works in some places

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because of their unbelief—even CHRIST, with all His power and strength. One way of helping GOD to make you what you want to be is by praying. Get up in the morning, then, punctually, before you come to school, and have your time of prayer. It is a most important thing ; you are helping GOD to make you a good girl and a good woman. Pray then for yourself. Think over what you especially want—more control of temper, more self-control generally, more application, more influence over others, more steadfastness—ask for it. “Seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened.” The Christian girl will pray, “Leave us not destitute of Thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them,” as in the Collect for St. Barnabas’ Day. But the Christian girl does not only pray for herself. I come across so many people who say, “I do not believe in prayer any more.” Why ? “Because I asked over and over again for something, but I have not got it.” That shows a great misunderstanding as to what prayer is. Prayer is not a selfish means by which we can get something. It may not be right for you to have it. It is a more unselfish ideal of prayer which the Christian girl should have in her mind. When she is praying for other people, she has a prayer list, and she prays for father and mother and brothers and sisters ; and what she realises is this—that by her prayer she puts her healing hands on the tired and weary and those who want help ; she lays her hands upon the sick and helps them to recover ; she lays her hands upon the sorrowful and gives them comfort. When we receive the falling of the HOLY SPIRIT at Confirmation we become lay priests. The Christian girl cannot forget this,

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because she has a list of people who want her to pray for them. All those who send in requests for petitions we pray for in the Mission, believing that "where two or three agree touching what they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My FATHER in Heaven." What I want you to realise is that the Christian girl puts out her young hand and brings a blessing by her prayer as she stretches it out towards GOD. You remember how the widow went to the unjust judge, but could not at first get any answer, but afterwards, because of her importunity, he granted her request; and the argument is, how much more will GOD answer? "I tell you, He will avenge them speedily." Therefore the Christian girl stretches out her arms towards GOD for others in regular intercession, because she is one of the healers of the world. She does not forget the missionaries; she prays for the Bishop and the clergy of the diocese, prays for the forty thousand people who come into the diocese every year, and prays for the millions of the heathen. The Christian girl not only prays for herself; she hears that beautiful invitation, "Ye that are the LORD'S remembrancers: take ye no rest, and give Him no rest, until He establish and until He make Jerusalem a praise to the earth." The "LORD'S remembrancers!"—a lovely title.

(4) Then, lastly, *what does the Christian girl do?* If this is what she believes, what she hopes, what she prays, what does she do? I think she has ringing in her ears, "Work, work, work, while it is day; the night cometh, when no one can work." And therefore she is quite conscious, even when

young, that life is a great opportunity which may be missed, but which must *not* be missed. I have been quoting in the Mission some lovely lines :

“ It is not well that life should know
The lovely secrets kept for them that die.”

I believe you will find those lines very comforting for those who have lost their relations. But we have lovely secrets already in life, and the Christian girl knows that one of the lovely secrets is that she is allowed to work for the GOD to Whom she belongs. First, she steadily witnesses to what she believes true. If you are asked how the world has been converted, the answer is by the witnesses, “ the unknown good, who rest in GOD’S still memory folded deep.” The Christian girl is steady in her school-life ; she is not swept away by every passing wind of doctrine or public opinion. We know perfectly well that sometimes in school-life, in the best schools, however well managed, there comes a bad tone into a form, or a bad tradition into the house, and that tries the Christian girl very much. It is not easy to keep from doing what everybody does. What steadies the Christian girl is her attitude when public opinion is against her. I know what a beautiful tone there is about a good school, but still I must not talk as if this were an earthly paradise. I know and realise that there must be temptations, there must be gusts of public opinion, which may make those who control it anxious. Therefore they have the right, and GOD has the right, to expect the Christian girl to be as firm as a rock, not minding being laughed at. I wonder whether you are all firm

witnesses. When the time comes when you may be scoffed at or laughed at, that is your trial time. In the days of persecution a child of ten stood up for her LORD against a regiment of soldiers. Do not be behind her. So again the Christian girl forgives. I do not think myself that anything is harder than real forgiveness. "I will forgive, but I cannot forget," we are apt to say. In one sense that is quite true; of course, the thing is photographed on your mind, and, like your own sins, even when forgiven, it must be remembered. But when people say they will forgive, but cannot forget, it often means that they do not forgive. The waters of Marah were purged by a tree being thrown into them, and the Marah of bitterness should be purged by forgiveness. Are you doing that? or am I speaking to someone who has got a quarrel with some other girl in the school, and is keeping the quarrel up? Or is there some jealousy? JESUS of Nazareth passeth by. That is what a Mission is. You would not like to bring that jealousy before Him. Let your resolution be, "I will give up that quarrel now." It would be a lovely thing for every Christian girl here to do—really to forgive. Then, again, the Christian girl *serves* as part of her work. Of all the lovely pictures we have during Lent and Holy Week, I think that the loveliest is that picture of our LORD taking the towel and girding Himself, and going round and washing the disciples' feet. It shows us what service is. "I am among them as He that serveth" was His motto—there was no claim to dignity, no claim to right, but He goes round just like a servant and washes the disciples' feet. "I give you this command—

ment, that ye do as I have done to you." "*Ich dien*"—"I serve." And the Christian girl is always looking to see how she can help everyone at home—such as her mother or father; or how she can help anyone in the school—she does not mind what it is; the more unnoticed, the more she loves to do it, because it is more like the service of CHRIST. And therefore my answer to the question what the Christian girl is doing is, She is witnessing, she is forgiving, and she is serving. I was very much struck with a beautiful story in a book called "*The Golden Windows*." I should like to leave you this as my last picture on your mind. All the children are coming up with their sheaves to be let into the great harvest-home. An angel is standing at the door, and one of the children has no sheaves at all. The angel said no one could come in without sheaves. Then the other children, one by one, began to plead for this child. "Let him in," said one; "do let him in, dear angel. He had some sheaves earlier in the day, but I was tired, and he gave me one of his sheaves; one of these belongs to him." Another said: "Do let him in, dear angel. I was so thirsty as I passed along, and he went and filled me a cup of cold water to refresh me." One said this, and another said that; so the angel—this is the end of the story—stretched his arm round the door and took out a bundle of sheaves. "These are his sheaves," he said. "Yes, I knew all about it; he *would* think of others more than himself." And, turning to the child, he said: "Lead the way in." That, then, is my picture of the Christian girl—what she believes, what she hopes, what she prays, what she

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does. I do earnestly pray that each one of you may be such a Christian girl—the Christian girl to-day is the Christian woman of to-morrow ; and on the Christian woman of to-morrow and how she brings up her children depends the Christianity of the country. May you all be such Christian girls as I have tried to depict, and when your life is over, may you receive the welcome that that child received after a life of unselfish service !

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